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A R E T A S,

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY EMMA PARKER,

*AUTHOR OF "ELFRIDA, HEIRESS OF BELGROVE," AND
"VIRGINIA, OR THE PEACE OF AMIENS."*

VOL. I.

Lei sol vagheggio; e se pur l'altre io miro,
Guardo nel vago altrui quel, ch' è in lei vago,
E ne gl' Idoli suoi vien ch'io l'adore :
Ma contanto somiglia al ver l' imago
Ch' erro, e dolc' è l'error ; pur ne sospiro,
Come d'ingiusta, Idolatria d'Amore.

TASSO.

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PREFACE.

THERE is not, perhaps, any species of composition more difficult to excel in, than that of Novel writing, notwithstanding it is so generally esteemed the mere scum of literature, the bubbling effervescence whose effects last but for the moment. But to those who are desirous of qualifying this evanescent property, by giving a character of solidity to such productions, the task is much more difficult than it appears. Let us for a moment survey the easy path mark-

EDWARD S. COPE

ed out for authors in another line. The Historian has only to state the facts he is acquainted with, and quote his authorities, in concise and pleasing language, and he cannot fail to give satisfaction : the same may be said in regard to the Biographer, whose grand charm is accuracy, precision, and an inflexible adherence to truth. Of those who treat on more profound subjects, I cannot pretend to speak, as I can form no idea of the extent of their labours ; but periodical papers, on desultory subjects, appear to me to be the most easy and agreeable, of all descriptions of writing ; while as much or as little as is convenient may be said, and you

may make choice of your own theme. But the author of a fictitious story, has the plot, contrivances, effect, style, all to attend to. His invention is called on to produce a complicated scheme that must be fruitful of a diversity of incidents, while all his sagacity is necessary to bring them about naturally, or even probably; and both judgment and feeling, are requisite to decide when they may be introduced with the best effect, and no inconsiderable portion of reflection must be exercised, before the whole variety of plot can be brought to agree. The style must sometimes be, (almost inevitably) inelegant, as the sentences cannot flow forth with

that even regularity, with which they may be fitted to general subjects. Being hampered with the story which they are obliged to convey, parenthesis, and an awkward extension of the phrases, often become requisite, in order to make the history intelligible. Thus that “conciseness in the construction of the sentences” which would infinitely improve them, is most difficult to effect. We are compelled, in order to excite an accurate conception of what we mean to represent, to describe even looks and gestures. We have to study how the feelings of the reader are gradually to be wrought up to the proper reception of our grandest scenes, and

after all, the whole effect of them may be destroyed owing to an unfortunate word, or luckless expression, which jars on the ear, or rather with the sensations of the Reader, and which instantly arrests his attention, withdrawing it from the subject we had laboured to make most interesting; as when contemplating the grand *coup d'oeil* of a lovely prospect, we suddenly espy a red brick manufactory placed in a conspicuous spot, we lose all our admiration in disgust at this unseemly object, to which the eye continually reverts, regardless of the beauties that surround it. Readers are also very apt to condemn one particular part of a story, and often re-

present (and with apparent justness,) how it might have been better contrived ; but they do not recollect that it is requisite this should unite with some other link in the chain of events, which does not immediately occur to them. They therefore should not be too ready to censure any distinct scene, till they have considered how far the other parts of the story are dependent on it. As a very young and inexperienced author, anxious to improve, and emulous to merit approbation, I attach but little weight to my own judgment (on literary subjects,) which must necessarily be immature ; but what I have now said has frequently occurred to me as I

dare say it has to all those who have exercised their talents in works of imagination ; and as to them, and those who feel an interest in the labours of the pen, this preface is chiefly addressed, I shall not apologize for its length, as I think they will feel some degree of sympathy with what I have advanced.

I am sorry I have no just claim to the character of a *prolific* writer (as I am asserted to be) “Elfrida” was ready for the press, a considerable time before it was published ; that delay was so far disadvantageous to “Virginia” as making it appear to come out too soon after the former, though still near a year elapsed be-

tween the publishing of the two works, though they have been spoken of as if they had actually accompanied each other. It is now a year and a half since I finished the latter, and it is no great proof of rapidity of composition to produce a work like the present, in that space of time, though wholly unassisted by any other person, even as a copyist, which I may affirm with the strictest veracity.

Industry is the only merit I lay claim to, nor am I perhaps entitled to any commendations on that head, for if not from principle, I should pursue it from policy, convinced that constant occupation is the panacea of life, and softener of every anxiety.

ARETAS.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

SIR Henry Mansfield, was one of the oldest baronets in England, and ranked amongst the most respectable, and wealthy gentlemen, of his native county.

The bonds of affection bound him still stronger than did the connubial tie, to an amiable lady, whose connections were equal to his own. The hero of these memoirs, and two daughters, were the fruits of this happy union. All flourish-

ed beneath the paternal eye : a governess was the instructress of the girls, a private tutor was preparing the boy for a public seminary ; while the parents rejoiced in witnessing the progress of their offspring, in those attainments best calculated to render them useful as well as accomplished members of society.

Sir Henry was a strong *party man*, though to have been *termed* so would have offended him beyond measure ; as he *professed*, (and really conceived himself) to be so liberal minded as to disdain being *bigoted* to either side, but believed he could judge without prejudice, or partiality, on every point, as well in regard to politics, as on those subjects less likely to inflame the imagination and irritate the feelings.—That his opinions

were founded on the only principles *he* could admit as *just, sound, and constitutional*, is unquestionable! whether they really *were* so, we shall neither attempt to dispute or assert, *that* being an object entirely foreign to the point we have in view; we shall therefore leave it to the reader to determine, whether sir Henry Mansfield *was* or *was not* of the *right* side of the question, when we add, that he was a *regular Pittite*! and espoused the principles of the political hero then at the head of his party, with all the enthusiasm which characterised his most strenuous supporters. For many succeeding generations, the head of the Mansfield family had continued the unopposed representative of a neighbouring borough; which now seemed almost like

a *prerogative* attached to the estate, and one sir Henry most confidently expected would never be disputed.

In the vicinity of Mansfield Abbey, (so called from its having been erected on the spot where once had stood a holy edifice) resided a very interesting lady, the widow of an officer, and mother of a son and daughter; the former about the same age as young Mansfield, his sister two years older.

Mrs. Hamilton had been deprived of the partner of her affections, ere she had reached her twenty-fifth year. Her nearest connections had died during her infancy, and she was left alone, to afford that protection and support to two helpless babes, which she herself required.

Her husband had been killed in battle, and with him sunk the slender means by which his family had been, till then, maintained; and an inconsiderable pension, (disgraceful to a liberal nation to offer to the hapless widows of the brave) obtained with trouble and humiliation, was all that remained to support a real gentlewoman, and educate and put into the world, the children of a man who had perished in his country's cause, and who had every claim to the character of a gentleman!

Unequalled is the pang which bursts the mortal ties uniting two congenial hearts! 'Tis not to be surpassed, nor can admit of increase; and though, when Mrs. Hamilton bent her eyes on her

blooming young ones, the gush of tears fell on their innocent heads, yet their imposing demands on her utmost exertions for their sakes, repelled the influence of despair, and presented the strongest stimulus to action that human nature can be susceptible of! Ambition may fire the soul, and impel the arm to deeds that shall astonish the world, and all sense of danger may be lost, in the dazzling prospect of rewards and honors! but weak are the operations of these objects over the heart, in comparison to *that* conveyed in the artless eyes of infancy looking up to you for protection, and depending alone on the Being who gave it life, for every benefit and advantage that can render existence a blessing.

No one could be more sensible of the importance of the charge that had devolved on her, than Mrs. Hamilton. It was in India her husband had met his fate, and from that distant region she was transported in a British man of war, the captain of which (who had known her husband) had politely offered a passage to the unfortunate widow and her children.

Mrs. Hamilton possessed all the advantages a superior education could bestow, and which she now found essentially serviceable to her; and during her long voyage she compiled from a note-book of her husband, aided by her own recollection, and the observations she had made, a very interesting description of

those parts of India they had together visited. She entertained sanguine hopes that by the sale of this work, she might be able to derive some emolument, nor were her expectations disappointed. Relenting fortune hailed her return to her native land. She found means to dispose of the labors of her pen, and was encouraged by the purchaser to exert her literary talents on other subjects; thus an agreeable and lucrative path seemed chalked out for her, unobstructed by the various *repellents* which most commonly arise to check the progress of those pursuing a similar career.

Mrs. Hamilton had the farther satisfaction of learning, soon after her return to England, that a distant relation had

left her a legacy of a thousand pounds; with the interest of this, her pension, and the produce of her pen, she doubted not she could maintain herself and children comfortably in retirement. A strict friendship had existed between lady Mansfield and herself, in their juvenile days, before either had married, and this induced Mrs. Hamilton to seek an abode in the neighbourhood of the Abbey, where every attention was shewn her by the Mansfield family; while her ladyship seized each opportunity of evincing her regard for the friend of her youth.

The gentleman who acted in capacity of tutor to Aretas Mansfield, participated in the interest the family experienced for Mrs. Hamilton, and most kindly offered

his gratuitous instructions to her son, a sprightly and intelligent lad, whose ready abilities rendered his tuition a pleasing task. He thus shared the advantages of his more prosperous companion, who considered him as a brother; and whether at their studies, or in their sports, they were inseparable. Horace spent most of his hours at the abbey, and whilst he made rapid progress in the attainment of knowledge, his mother spared time from her literary avocations (which during some years that she had now spent in retirement, she had pursued with increasing ardour) to attend to her daughter's education, as well as to superintend her inconsiderable *ménage*, a task she thought by no means

derogatory to the *dignity of authorship.*

Constance Hamilton, from being two years older than her brother, and so considerably the senior of her friends, the Miss Mansfields, was a woman, in comparison to them, at the period of life from which I purpose to trace their destinies, (when Aretas, who was older than his sisters, had nearly attained his fourteenth year;) but they were never so happy as when they could get her to be the leader of their juvenile party, and the satisfaction was mutual, for she was just at that age, when to be childish, she felt perfectly natural, though competent to act the woman if requisite. A happy

assemblage of features, the glow of health, and serene aspect of content, were sufficient to constitute the interesting loveliness of sixteen, while vivacity and good-humour completed the charm her presence never failed to convey to her youthful associates.

CHAPTER II.

I Shall now introduce to the reader, another neighbour of sir Henry Mansfield, of a very different description from the persons presented in the foregoing chapter ; and it will, perhaps, not be amiss, to state the circumstance which led to the near vicinity of two characters, destined never to assimilate. The estate adjoining *that* attached to the abbey, produced an income nearly equal to what sir Henry derived from his landed property ; but the possessor of it, from seldom resid-

ing there, raising the rents, and incumbering his patrimony with heavy mortgages, retained very little influence in the county. Madly pursuing the career of dissipation, he was whirled rapidly along the road to ruin, and soon arrived at that point, which rendered the sale of his estate necessary to secure the liberty of his person; and the extensive domain was sold in different lots, with a view of disposing of it to the greatest advantage. Much of the land adjoining his own, sir Henry was very anxious to obtain, and deputed his agent to purchase it, even should he be obliged to give a larger sum for it than it was strictly worth. Yet, notwithstanding this, he was disappointed in his hope of possessing it, as the land sold for double its value, and became the pro-

erty of a man, who, being resolved to have the estate, purchased each different portion of it, having previously declared his determination that no one *should* outbid him, for that he had fixed his mind on the place, and would have it if it cost him a plum. Having thus *wisely* made his resolution public, he of course paid accordingly, to the very considerable benefit of the late proprietor of the estate, and to the infinite annoyance of sir Henry Mansfield. Anthony Greaves, formerly an eminent soap-boiler and tallow-chandler in Seething-lane, and moreover a member of the common-council, and violent supporter of sir F*****s B*r**tt, became the 'Squire of Turnpenny-hall.

To notice such a person as Mr. Anthony

Greaves, sir Henry conceived entirely out of the question, and to have been invited by any of the neighbouring families to meet him, he would have considered as an insult: for, independent of his political principles, to which he was no stranger, the situation in life from which Mr. Greaves had risen, was, in sir Henry's eyes, an insurmountable bar to forming an acquaintance with him. Sir Henry was perhaps singular in his ideas on this head; but *so* he thought; and acted consistently with that opinion in taking no manner of notice of his new neighbour, who confidently expected, from their near vicinity, that sir Henry would be the first person who would pay his respects to him; but on finding this ceremony omitted, he (to soothe his

pride, which too plainly whispered the real cause of sir Henry's neglect,) scrupled not to impute it to the discordance of their public sentiments. By this too, he gained some elevation in his own opinion, for to be considered of sufficient consequence to be disliked by sir Henry Mansfield on account of his politics, was allowing him a degree of importance on *that* score, which he had never before attained. But a most inveterate hatred was excited in his breast against sir Henry, by this total disregard of him, which appeared the more pointed, as most of the neighbouring gentlemen had called on him; the general opinion agreeing with that he himself entertained; simply, that his wealth and independence entitled him to respect and attention. He had an only son, whom

he resolved *should* be a gentleman, and he had sent him to college, as a grand step towards making him such. On *his* account he had converted so much of his money into landed property ; looking forward in the hope of seeing him a man of extensive influence ; in short a *great* man, in *his* acceptation of the phrase, though, perhaps, not exactly such as Johnson would have defined it.

Little more than a year had elapsed, (during which sir Henry had become an object of absolute detestation in the eyes of his opulent neighbour, though the baronet had almost forgotten there was such a man in existence as Mr. Anthony Greaves, so totally insignificant did he esteem him) when a public calamity

proved a serious disturbance to the domestic peace of the former. The illustrious head of his party was snatched from the scene of his earthly glory; and with him sunk the power and long flourishing influence of his partisans!

The meeting of parliament called sir Henry to town: he went to the House, but took not his accustomed place, and felt indeed completely *out* of it, in seating himself *opposite* to the ministerial benches. He brought forward motions: he proposed amendments: but his name was continually in the minority; and he experienced that degree of ire and mortification, ever endured by those accustomed to undisputed power, when any impedi-

ment to the fruition of their wishes presents itself.

Disgusted, and completely out of humour with all the servants of the state, he left town before the prorogation of parliament; and far retired from the scene of political warfare, in the bosom of his family, his spirit was soothed to tranquillity, and that aggravated irritation, excited by premeditated opposition, lulled to repose. Here he found happiness in promoting the welfare and advantage of all those to whom he could prove serviceable: the smile of affection, and the eye beaming with gratitude, are, to the heart susceptible of tender emotions, an infallible antidote to those wounds springing from a *public* source

(if I may be allowed the expression,) and which, though painful in effect, can never bear a comparison with those arising from a domestic calamity.

Sir Henry felt peculiar satisfaction in removing from the mind of the amiable Mrs. Hamilton, the anxiety she could not fail to experience respecting the future provision of her son: sir Henry had a living in his gift, the reversion of which he promised young Horace, and it was determined he should be brought up to the church; and perhaps the genuine delight this arrangement excited in the breast of Mrs. Hamilton, while she was impressed with the deepest sense of what she owed the worthy baronet, was not superior to the pleasure he felt in exercising

his liberality.—In his only son, he contemplated his future representative: he who was to perpetuate the honours of his house, and who he trusted would one day, by the virtues of his character, and rare qualifications of his mind, immortalize his *own* name, nor inertly rest on the established fame of his progenitors to support its consequence, or sustain its estimation in society. Every advantage that the most liberal and learned education could bestow, he was resolved should be his; taking care, at the same time, so strongly to instil into his youthful mind his own principles and opinions, as effectually to prevent his entertaining ideas inimical to the ruling sentiments of his parent; and the boy would already support with vehemence the immortality of a

Pitt! while the bloom on his cheek would spread with deepened hue over his whole countenance, as with eager agitation he read aloud the debates, or inveighed against the then head of the ministry.

The exulting parent's encouraging smile, and the responsive glance which met the quick darting eye of the youthful politician, spoke approbation of his intemperate zeal, and instead of checking his presumption, confirmed the strength of party spirit by the indestructible influence of early prejudice. It is almost needless to say, that young Horace was of the same principles as his patron; he was almost the only intimate companion of his own years, that Aretas had, for his father was extremely particular respecting his associates.

Sir Henry was by some people reckoned proud, but it was not the pride of birth nor of wealth ! if it was pride *at all*, it was that of intellect and talents, and he admitted none as *intimates*, but such as he could derive instruction or entertainment from, on which account the circle that frequented his house, on a *familiar* footing, was not very extensive. Yet he was not neglectful of the rights of hospitality, and there were particular days on which he received all the neighbouring gentry in their turn, and made that sacrifice to form and politeness, his situation in life required.

CHAPTER III.

THE same cause certainly could not operate in regard to Mrs. Hamilton, who, it might be supposed, in her confined sphere, would have escaped the tediousness of receiving visits from indifferent people ; but such was not the case, and she was doomed to support the *scrutinizing* attentions of several families resident at a small town in the vicinity, who, expecting to see something very extraordinary in

the looks, manners, and conversation, of a lady of her *calling*, had hastened to gratify their curiosity soon after she had taken up her abode at the cottage.

There can be little doubt, that Mrs. Hamilton fell considerably in their estimation, when they found that her person, dress, and behaviour, were in no way eccentric or remarkable. She was arrayed in moderate compliance to the fashion of the day, her manners were perfectly unstudied, nor did she betray any consciousness of attracting peculiar notice. Her language, though polite and refined, was by no means pedantic, she was rarely attacked by unconquerable fits of absence; there was no wildness in her eyes, no catching in her features, or any of those

extraordinary contortions supposed to be contracted by intense thought, or too active application of the mental faculties ; owing to which she sunk rapidly in the estimation of the vulgar, who agreed that she could not possibly be endowed with any uncommon talents, since she betrayed nothing that denoted her to be unlike other people.

Feeling grateful for the intended civility, which Mrs. Hamilton had too much charity to impute to the real motive, she did not entirely reject it, but kept on an amicable footing with her intrusive neighbours, by appearing at their parties two or three times in the course of a year, which they called, being on *visiting* terms. A description of one of these evening

parties, at which Mrs. Hamilton was present, and where, for the first time, her daughter accompanied her, may perhaps afford some amusement to the reader.—Most of the ladies were assembled at Mrs. Topping's (she was the widow of an attorney and had one daughter) when Mrs. Hamilton and Constance arrived. The room was nearly lined with females, and Constance, in compliance with Miss Topping's request, took a seat amongst the younger of them. She found they were all talking with much animation of some officer, who had lately come to the town on the recruiting service.

Miss Topping, a short, fat, vulgar looking girl, with a broad face and wide mouth, addressed Constance, enquiring—

" If she knew Mr. Dulks?" Constance answered in the negative, and Miss Topping added, " I dare say you have heard of him before?" " No," returned Constance, " this is the first time I ever heard the name mentioned." " I am sure it is a very *odd* one!" observed another young lady, tittering. " It may be a very *odd* one," retorted Miss Topping, with some asperity, " but I assure you Miss Bullock it is a very *genteel* one. Mr. Dulks is a very *elegant* young man, and though he cannot be called exactly handsome, he has a very pleasing expression of countenance, and he is so lively and entertaining, it is impossible to be dull in his company. We expect him here to-night, and then, Miss Hamilton, *you* I am sure will agree with me that he is quite the

gentleman. O ! here he comes,"—she added, with a start of pleasure, as the door opened, and in swung a diminutive son of Mars, bedecked in all the emblems of his profession, yet bearing any thing but a *formidable* appearance, unless indeed the pointed projection of his nose, which formed the exact outline of an equilateral triangle stuck between two sallow cheeks, might have excited some apprehension lest, if chancing to run against him, one might receive some serious injury. Two little grey eyes, that seemed by their constant direction towards it to be mightily enamoured of this mathematical appendage, appeared continually at enmity with each other, and what was still more lamentable, often excited false hopes in the breasts of some *suscepti-*

ble fair, who imagined he was tenderly gazing on *her*, while he was in reality directing his soft glances to her more fortunate rival.—Mr. Dulks's teeth much resembled the alternate chequers of a chess-board, while his *extensive* mouth looked large enough to have admitted one. Yet with all these personal disadvantages, he would have been no object of *ridicule*, in the eyes of a sensible or humane being; but a wretched attempt to appear witty and fashionable, and an insufferable degree of self-conceit and presumption, rendered him a subject of satire and contempt to every judicious beholder.

On boldly entering the apartment, (which he did with an air of effrontery, though there was still that awkwardness

in his gait, that discovered he thought every body's eyes were fixed on him), he looked around for Mrs. Topping, who was seated behind the door, and as much out of sight as possible, but she rose with precipitation at Mr. Dulks's entrance ; so indeed did every person in the room, except Mrs. Hamilton. Mrs. Topping endeavoured to make her way forward, which was rather a difficult task, so many persons being standing, and some of them having moved a little out of their places, to make room for a chair for Mr. Dulks, the room withal being of no very extensive dimensions.

However, Mrs. Topping at length reached Mr. Dulks, to whom she curtseyed several times as she said, " How do

you do Mr. Dulks, I hope you are very well Sir, I am very glad to see you here Sir ! give me leave to introduce you to my friends." She continued, pointing out each individual as she named them, and from most of whom Mr. Dulks received most gracious courtesies, though variously *performed*; as Mrs. Topping went on—" That is Mrs. Hamilton, Sir, and Miss Hamilton, and Mrs. Bullock, Miss Bullock, and Miss Eliza Bullock, Mrs. Tailor, Sir, and Miss Grimsby, and Miss Glover, and Miss Sarah Glover, and my Jane, Sir, you know"—continued the lady with a facetious smile—" and now you will please to be seated!"

Mr. Dulks, whose head almost ached with nodding it at so many people, gladly

took the chair that had been placed for him next Miss Topping, when a very animated dialogue ensued, carried on in a half whisper, accompanied with repeated bursts of laughter, which much astonished those who were near enough to catch a few words, which merely related to the state of the weather and of the roads.—Constance had seized the opportunity afforded by a general *move*, of getting near her mother, for she no sooner beheld Mr. Dulks, than she was anxious to get as *far* from him as she possibly could.

Two other males now increased the party, the clergyman of the parish, an infirm old man, and a lad who was clerk to an attorney; and Constance overheard

one of the young ladies observe,—“Upon my word, we have quite a *shew* of *beaux* to-night !”

Mrs. Topping now addressed Mrs. Hamilton, saying, “Well ma’am ! have you been to call on your new neighbour ? *She* that has taken farmer Bedow’s lodgings.” “No, I really did not know they were occupied !”

“Law ! now, only think of that ! and you live so near ! Well to be sure I should have thought you would have been quite intimate by this time, for she has been there *three* weeks ! I must say I like to be civil to strangers, so I sent Betty, my cook, to find out her history, and all about her ; just to know if it

would be proper I should call on her. And so, you must know, she has got a maid, a decent looking body enough ! *Betty* says she had a very smart bonnet, and a pair of *fine white* cotton stockings on ; then to be sure they *might* be old ones of her mistress's, or she may be able to afford to give her *new* ones, for *Betty* says there was not a single darn *above* shoe, and—”

Mrs. Topping stopped to recover the thread of her story, and her weary auditor sincerely hoped that this *episode* relating to the maid, would supersede the original tale in the mind of the relater, and that she should be spared the repetition of it; but fallacious was this anticipation, and Mrs. Topping resumed her theme by observing—“ Well, I wonder she is not come ! for you must know I

called on her, on learning through her maid, that her friends were very proper sort of people ; *London* folks, I assure you ! and live in the most fashionable part of the town ! close to the Bank, she says, and the Grand Lottery Office, and General Post Office, and all those fine places : but the young lady don't like all these gay things, but wishes to be *retired*, which is very *steady* and *proper* you know : Besides she is a great hand at her pen, and she is writing from morning till night, except in the dusk of the evening, when she strolls to the church-yard.

She must be monstrous clever to be sure ! I dare say she will just suit you ma'am ! as you are so quick in that way yourself. I don't know if she has ever *printed*, but I

dare say if she has, you have heard of her name, I suppose you know every body that *prints* ma'am!"

Mrs. Hamilton took no notice of this vulgar allusion to her literary character, which nothing but the ignorance of the speaker could excuse, and Mrs. Topping probably did not observe the dissatisfaction which was nevertheless very apparent in Mrs. Hamilton's countenance, and she proceeded to inform her that, "Though the strange lady had not returned her visit, yet, as she was going to have a party, she thought she might as well ask her, as she should not have another for some time, and so (to use her own expression) kill all the birds with one stone. She continued—

"To be sure the answer I got to my note, which Jane wrote, was the prettiest thing I ever saw ! Quite the woman of fashion, I assure you ! and I understood by it that she meant to come, but perhaps I mistook ! I should be glad ma'am you would just read it over, for I can't exactly tell how to call the name."

Mrs. Topping took from her pocket the precious *morceau* which she had wrapped in a piece of brown paper, and while disengaging it from its *surtout* to present it to Mrs. Hamilton, she added, "I must put it out of my pocket, for fear it should be rubbed ! I would not it should be injured for the world ; for if this lady comes to *print*, you know, and be talked of a good deal, it will be quite a boast for me to be

able to say I have got some of her hand writing.

A smile played over the features of Mrs. Hamilton, as in compliance with Mrs. Topping's request she read the note, which was written on highly glazed paper, having a broad edge, truly emblematical of the fair object from whom it came, being a heterogeneous jumble of the most absurd and unnatural devices. The contents ran thus—

“Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron, the *stranger* without a home! the wild inhabitant of the rustic shade! the wandering *exile*, compelled by the *irresistible* shafts of *adversity* to meet the yawning *horrors* of her *irrevocable destiny*! bows the inclin-

ing ear to the dulcet voice of *hospitality* ! so shall her balsamated soul be resigned to pacific influence, by intermingling with her fellow beings !—On the appointed eve she will be punctual, e'en as that orb she now invokes to shine propitious on the dawn of friendship !”

No comment passed the lips of Mrs. Hamilton on this *superlative* production, and Mrs Topping's eulogy of it was interrupted by the entrance of the inimitable author of the praise-worthy composition. She was as *tall* as any heroine could possibly wish to be, and if *height alone*, had been requisite to excite interest, she might have felt secure of engaging her full share of it; but unfortunately, could *breadth* or *circumference* have given her the same

claim, she might have felt equally satisfied on that head.

Spite of the perfection, to which the controul of shape, has been carried in the nineteenth century, by the formidable operations of a phalanx of bones, against that ungraceful redundancy of substance, which dares to obtrude itself in unseemly directions; it was evident, in the person of this luxuriant fair, that the contest was by no means equal, and the above mentioned phalanx had no chance whatever, against the unwieldy pressure that opposed it.

The most *sylphic* vestments enfolded this Herculean form: while a transparent *azure* drapery, depended from the back

of the head; tho' what it was intended for, or meant to represent, no one could find out: Probably it was assumed as emblematic of the ethereal particles emanating from the source to which it was attached. Be that as it may, the countenance betrayed no very extraordinary predominance of the divine influence, while the obstinate vermillion, which, as well as the semi-globes it dyed, had withstood the united operations of vinegar and lemon juice, little accorded with the *pensorosa* cast it was doomed to contradict. Her uncurled *tresses* of jetty hue were parted on the forehead, *intended* to be arranged in bands, but not being sufficiently profuse to answer the design, they merely (like our first enemy the Serpent) succeeded in reaching the fair one's *ears*, but

not content to linger there, they were continually escaping from the bounds allotted them, and still retaining their resemblance to the foe of man, dangled over the delicate features of this captivating Medusa.

The entrance of the person, of whom we have thus endeavoured to give a faint representation; her measured step, her folded arms, her inclining form, (improved as she advanced to a condescending bend, intended to be most *picturesquely* elegant) impressed the whole company, with the exception of our widow and her youthful scion, with *reverential awe*! Not one dared to open their lips; even Mrs. Topping's volubility forsook her, and for the *first* time in her life, she omitted the

ceremony of introducing the stranger to every individual present, nor could she muster courage to address a single observation to *the wild inhabitant of the rustic shade!* so great was her apprehension of receiving a puzzling answer.

The terror striking object (and *terror striking* indeed ! she might have been esteemed, had she but lifted one of her ponderous arms in a menacing attitude) threw herself on a sofa, where a place had been *cleared* for her, and assumed an air of total abstraction, apparently unconscious that she had deprived two persons of their seats. The wondering natives questioned within themselves, whether she had not fallen asleep with her eyes open ! a supposition which afforded them infinite re-

lief: while at other moments they were inclined to believe that some vision of extraordinary import engrossed her imagination, and they could scarcely have been more surprised and awed had she suddenly broke forth in a prophetic strain of eloquence, and unravelling the mysteries of fate, foretold their destinies with solemn gestures and portentous voice.

Mrs. Topping now gave the signal to her daughter to make the tea. "Jane, my dear!" she cried, nodding towards the tea equipage, which was arranged on a table in a corner of the room, and with some reluctance Miss Topping quitted her vicinity to Mr. Dulks, and commenced her arduous task, while Mrs.

Betty the *cook*, waited to perform the part of footman.

According to the directions of her mistress, she proceeded to serve the stranger first, but not even a glance could she obtain from her, and as neither mistress nor maid dare venture to disturb the lady by addressing her, Betty, after waiting patiently for some time, went round, and served the rest of the company, when again the steaming beverage was presented to the delicate Alexandrina ! But tho' the exhalations in columns of mist, like the clouds on which rode "the spirits of old," rose in curling vapors, and the breath from her nostrils "rolled it together," she appeared unconscious of its proximity ! nor could the grateful effluvia

of hot toast, or still more potent temptation of muffins *swimming* in butter, prove a stimulus to her appetite, or excite the organs of taste: *Humanity* also seemed dead in her breast, while the unfortunate handmaid's outstretched arms, supporting a tray of enormous circumference, trembled with the unnatural extension. Her mistress made signs to her to address the lady: Betty formed her lips for speech, but could not articulate in such august presence, but still retained her painful station. How did the dowagers and damsels rejoice, that they had first obtained a supply of *what* in the present posture of affairs, it appeared very probably would, otherwise, never have reached them.

Short-sighted mortals ! how little are ye aware in the gay sunshine of apparent prosperity, how fragile, how deceptious, is the occasion of your joy ! Let fate present the woes which load the coming moment, and that joy shall be turned into sorrow, and ye shall lament the very circumstance ye before esteemed an earnest of the smiles of fortune !

While these thoughtless beings were with complacent features, resulting from the consciousness of the good they had in possession, devouring the *porous* eatables that generously yielded amber drops that trickled over their fingers, but which they regarded not, feeling perfectly at ease in the confidence that *cambric* gloves would wash, and that therefore they might be

genteel with impunity, and while they were carelessly sipping the draught doomed the next moment to effect destruction! — Betty spoke!

"Please ma'am!" she stopped, but the mischief was done! Awful words! Big with the fate of robes, fans, kerchiefs!

No sooner had they passed her lips, than a start,—as if of the junction of opposing worlds! shook the fair object to whom they were addressed: it had the instantaneous effect of electricity on the whole company. So sudden, so violent a movement from a source so still, so apparently torpid, was so totally unexpected, that the strongest nerves could not resist the force of sympathy, and one united shock affected

the whole circle! There stuck the recumbent muffin, adhering to the blushing sarsenet, whose hue grew deeper at its touch! and here the envious coffee, and no less cruel tea, deprived for ever of their natural tint, alike the satins that had passed from generation to generation, and the more modern coloured muslin! In short there was scarcely an individual of the party that could not produce indisputable proofs of the irresistible power of sympathy! Hardly less contagious was the distress pictured in the looks of the sufferers, and it was long before they could recover a semblance of composure.

Mrs. Hamilton and Constance were fortunately attired in white muslin, from which the stains could be easily extracted,

but they felt extremely provoked at the folly, and, to them, obviously studied absurdity of the person, whose ridiculous affectation had caused such dire effects, and at which she herself seemed by no means distressed, or indeed scarcely aware of, for after inflicting the electric shock, (of which Betty partook of in a strong degree, though fortunately not so violently as to cause her to let fall her load) the half aroused Alexandrina stammered out, as her eyes rolled violently round—
“ What?—who?—where?—Eat!” her wandering *orbs* revolving on the tea-tray,
“ O, no! I never eat! that is—I mean
—retire, retire, I supplicate you!”

It was not requisite to repeat this request a second time, and Mrs. Topping

was too much *awe-struck* to attempt practising her usual habit of pressing people to eat, almost to a coercive degree, however great their disinclination might be.

The unfortunate repast being concluded, Mrs. Topping ventured to ask her *strange* guest, if she would *please* to play cards.

On hearing her addressed, the company were fully prepared to behold another start, but *three* times did the patient Mrs. Topping repeat her simple question in vain ; and had it been to request the solution of a problem, it is *certain* the reply could not have been longer protracted, for alas ! it came not at all ; and poor Mrs. Topping had the mortification to observe

this redundant genius, very composedly take a tablet and pencil from her *ridicule*, and with enthusiastic gestures, write down some, no doubt, sublime effusion of her exuberant fancy, which had been fermenting till it became no longer controllable.

From this time Miss *Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron* was left to her meditations, which no one felt inclined to interrupt, and Mrs. Topping was now engaged in the very perplexing task of forming her card tables. She succeeded in arranging a whist party, of which Mrs. Hamilton made one, but it was long ere her utmost efforts could constrain the obstreperous guests to seat themselves at the other tables; for so excessively polite

were they, that each scrupled to place herself before the other, and this contention of refined breeding lasted till an old lady, esteemed of the least consequence amongst this illustrious assemblage, very composedly seated herself at the quadrille-table, being anxious to commence the traffic.

The contest was immediately terminated, and three other *fair* ones hastily placed themselves, when a dispute arose respecting which should keep the pool, each protesting she had not the smallest desire to undertake so weighty a charge, at length it was agreed it should be *cut* for, and the triumphant favourite of fortune assumed her office with affected indifference, and ill-dissembled joy.

But the most arduous task still remained to be performed, viz. the arrangement of the *round table*: both Mrs. and Miss Topping were to be of this party. The former had just began a long story to Mrs. Bullock, respecting a bad shilling she had taken at cards, and the latter was renewing her brisk attack on Mr. Dulks, whom she kept close to, and by every means in her power endeavoured to impress him with a high opinion of her consequence, and the insignificance of all the other young ladies present.

“ Sarah Glover is pretty,” said she, “ but she is the *youngest* of them, and *that* in my opinion is her only advantage, the other was *out* long before *I* can remember! Some of the families in the neigh-

bourhood take notice of them out of *charity*, for poor creatures they have very little to live on.—But I hope you will remain here some time, we shall always be happy to see you, I will shew you all the walks *about*. There are not many people in the town *you* would like to associate with; for my part I prefer select company, I hate large parties! I hope you will come and see us in the family way.”

“Jane, my dear! the ladies are waiting!” said Mrs. Topping, but Jane did not hear her, while she continued simpering, smirking, and chattering to the fascinating Mr. Dulks. *Even* he could perceive what sort of girl she was, and determined to have some amusement at

her expense, and as they were establishing themselves round the table, he contrived to seat himself next Miss Sarah Glover.

The colour mantled in Miss Topping's cheeks, and it was with the greatest difficulty she could conceal her ill-humour, while her rival, a sensible, discreet girl, was much annoyed by Mr. Dulks's pert flippancy, and endeavoured to check him, by her reserved and chilling manner.

The game was Pope Joan, and several times Miss Topping accused Miss Sarah Glover of playing into her neighbour's hand, peeping at the stops, &c. in short a sort of *sparring* match was kept up between them, but, however, Miss Sarah

was only on the *defensive* and returned the gross attacks of her adversary with slight sarcasms and inuendos.

Anything rather than *harmony* seemed to preside at this table, and Constance (who had declined playing cards, but was looking on) quite disgusted with what she observed, moved round to the quadrille table.—“Hearts *is* trumps!” cried one of the *ladies*. “Aye, you need not tell me that,” said another, “for all my poor *dimends* was cut to pieces: I have *mats* though!” “Nay, that can’t be, for I had a black ace!” “No, that you had not!” “I had *though*, and I’ll swear to it.”

All four now talked together, and Constance hurried away, and seating herself

beside her mother, determined to keep that station for the remainder of the evening.

Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron was now placed in a situation she by no means relished. To engross the attention of the whole company, to attract exclusive notice, or to excite amazement, which she considered synonymous with admiration, was the drift of her whole conduct. The method she had adopted had succeeded very well at first, but it was now obvious that its effects had been extremely transitory, for as her eye ranged round the apartment, she could not perceive the regards of a single individual fixed upon her.

In the superior interest excited by the

occupation they were pursuing, the dread of this *awe-inspiring* being, and the misfortunes she had occasioned, seemed alike forgotten. It therefore behoved the ingenious lady to strike out some means of rallying the attention of the party to the point where she wished it to centre. But this was no easy task, nor did she possess talents to compass so *great* an end. Her powers of astonishing were confined to her person, dress and manners, for nothing that sprung from her mind was calculated to retain for a single moment the attention of a rational being. At last she suddenly exclaimed—“ Cards ! Heavens ! are you playing cards ?”

Mrs. Topping was nearest to her, and rejoicing to find she had awakened from

her trainee, she replied—"Yes, ma'am, we are *a* playing cards ! perhaps you would like to join us?"—"Merciful Powers ! not for the universe would I distress you so much ! my soul would wander far from the narrow board while my body alone would remain, dead to surrounding objects."

"Dear ma'am ! how can you talk so ! I dare say you have many years to live yet ! you look very healthy I am sure." Without regarding what Mrs. Topping had said, the elegant enthusiast continued,

"Is it possible you can confine your thoughts within that narrow range, when

such extensive fields are open to their excursions.

“ Why, to be sure, there are some very pretty walks about this town, but I must own I like a game of cards myself of an evening! Now our back gate opens into very fine fields, but for my part I like the high-road best when I do walk, it is so pleasant to meet all the stage-coaches, and see the travellers go backwards and forwards.”

“ The high-road!” repeated Alexandrina with a look of horror, “ Odious! insufferable! the beaten track must ever be irksome to a luxuriant fancy! But I know I am eccentric! taught in nature’s

school I—I—Pardon me, madam, my thoughts wander, I—I—”

This luxuriant fancy was not very fertile in words, at least such as were appropriate to her favourite style of declamation, and when at a loss she always resumed a sudden air of abstraction, nor spoke again till she had studied the phrases she meant to sport off. This last effort of eloquence had failed of effect, no one appeared to have heeded it, and the labour it had cost her was therefore unrepaid.

Disheartened by this failure, and despairing under the present aspect of the company, of being more successful in a

second attempt, she resolved (as she was sitting in a part of the room from whence she could not reach the door without disturbing the whole party) to take her departure, leaving an impression that should not easily subside. She suddenly started up, and turning to Mrs. Topping, exclaimed in hurried accents, “ Dearest madam, excuse me—a subject of the utmost importance—a theme that demands the exercise of my whole imagination calls me hence—I feel *irresistibly impelled*—Pardon me, madam—another time I will do honour to your hospitality—now my whole soul is on the wing !”

Her design proved successful ; her sudden movement and voice purposely elevated attracted the attention of every one

present: the whole company was instantaneously in motion, every chair, every table, was of necessity moved before this general disturber could reach the door; towards which she proceeded in a manner grotesquely ridiculous, bending to each individual as she passed, with an air which most of them thought inimitably graceful.

No sooner had she disappeared, than there seemed a kind of contest who should be first to express their admiration of her, so anxious was each to display their sagacity and penetration, by declaring their conviction that the *elegant* stranger was a person of most extraordinary talents! A genius unparalleled!

About half past eight o'clock, British wine and plum-cake were handed round, and at nine several of the ladies were informed their servants waited, and shortly after, the rubber being over and the pool out, a general confusion, far surpassing the former, ensued.

Betty entered and re-entered a dozen times, loaded with hats, cloaks, hoods, clogs, shoes, tippets, great-coats, &c. and each of the party was vociferous to obtain what belonged to herself, many of the ladies *tearing*, with some degree of impatience, their property from the hands of the others ; while some very loud arguments that displayed a flow of eloquence and refined oratory, ensued on the rights asserted to various articles which a plu-

rality of persons claimed with equal impetuosity. To this succeeded an absolute *peal of good nights* repeated from every quarter, and by every individual twenty times over, while Constance, to whom such scenes were new, could not help thinking how much more agreeable was the modern custom, she had observed practised at the elegant parties she had met at Mansfield Abbey, of taking *French leave*, while every individual was permitted to depart in *peace*, without being subject to the overwhelming clamour of a *general good night*.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING pourtrayed the amiable Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron as she wished to appear, it would not be amiss to represent her such as she really was. Her father was a bookseller and publisher, resident in the city; at six years of age she had been sent to a boarding school, where she had continued till she was sixteen. She was then motherless, and returned home to keep her father's house;

but so far from managing it, she created in it the greatest confusion and disturbance, for she was of all persons least calculated for a notable housewife.

Her whole time was consumed in reading such publications as best suited her taste and capacity, and which were not exactly those calculated to improve either. These books she purloined from her father's shop, by which he was a considerable loser. It was in vain the parent expostulated, she reproached him with the miserable life he condemned her to, in forcing her to reside in a situation so unbecoming a person of her refinement, and of wishing to deprive her of the *only* source of amusement within her reach.

The father was silenced, and thought it better to compound for the loss of a few books, (which from having the leaves cut, and being tolerably *thumbed* were no longer saleable) than indulge his daughter in taking summer excursions, and visiting watering places, as many other tradesmen did, and which she was constantly soliciting him to admit of.

Year after year passed on, and still he continued inexorable, while she imagined herself a persecuted heroine, condemned by a tyrannical father to a fate the most deplorable. To thwart and oppose him in every thing, was her greatest enjoyment; at length she affected indisposition, asserting that the closeness of the situation was the cause of her illness, and that

nothing but change of air could afford her any relief, when to rid himself of her presence and complaints, he promised to supply her with the means to support her in retirement, he himself selecting the spot she should repair to, which he was resolved should be remote from any scene of public gaiety.

Now again she felt herself the heroine, and immediately determined on sustaining that mysteriousness of character she had so often read so interestingly described, and as a leading step, she dropped the name of Anne Clarke, assuming that of Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron; and, fancying she had talents for composition, she consumed many of her hours in attempting, what she never could succeed in. The

rest of her time was spent in wandering about the adjacent country, probably in the hope of finding a hero for her tale, while the studied eccentricity of her air and manner, attracted the observation of every one who beheld her. She had eagerly seized the opportunity afforded her, by Mrs. Topping's invitation, to display herself to perfection, and impress the company assembled with a due sense of the profundity of her genius.

While Mr. Dulks was gallantly escorting some of the ladies to their residence, Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter proceeded homeward; but they had not reached the end of the town, when they encountered Horace and his friend Aretas, who had been parading the streets for

some time, in order that they might meet them and have the pleasure of attending them home. These youths were premature men in their manners and conversation, owing to their being constantly accustomed to the society of persons older than themselves.

Horace was fondly attached to his mother and sister, yet Aretas would not have admitted that *his* affection for the *latter* was inferior to that of her brother, nor did this sentiment meet discouragement from any quarter, every one esteemed him a child, and as such, there was no reason why his regard for his play-fellow should be checked. Had an idea been entertained either by his friends or Mrs. Hamilton, that this juvenile prepos-

session might ripen into a more tender attachment at a future period, no doubt, effectual steps would have been taken to have prevented the possibility of so unpropitious a circumstance.

That *her* daughter should prove an obstacle to sir Henry's views, in respect to his son, would have occasioned the bitterest regret to Mrs. Hamilton, who would have lain down her life for her benefactor; and it is certain sir Henry himself, even with the exercise of his utmost magnanimity, would have found it next to impossible to have reconciled his mind to the idea of his son's forming such an alliance. But these suggestions were far from the thoughts of *either* parent, nor did they find place in the

imagination of any individual, save that of the youth himself. He had read of love ! he had mourned with Achilles the absence of his Briseis, and partaken in the hero's resentment when the fair prize was unjustly ravished from him ! He had dropped a tear for Dido on the funeral pile, and called Æneas unfeeling and insensible, and never felt so strong an interest either for Greek or Trojan, as he did for the gallant christian leader, the youthful Rinaldo, when in Armida's bower he had well nigh forgotten all but the fair enchantress herself ! In short, Homer, Virgil and Tasso had convinced Aretas that there existed a sentiment more animated even than filial affection, or fraternal regard : he had heard that he must one day marry, and he prayed

that his sweet Constance might be his wife. Almost unknown to himself, he encouraged the idea, and daily she became dearer to him, while the deference he paid to her opinions, owing to her superiority of years, which inspired a veneration for her judgment, drew them nearer to each other.

Aretas was now uncommonly tall for his age, and promised in that respect to equal his father, who was of majestic stature. His features, though of no very uncommon description (with the exception of his eyes) were set off to such infinite advantage by a glowing complexion, that he was universally esteemed excessively handsome, and if beauty consists in the expression of the countenance,

he might most justly be so denominated. When his feelings were perfectly calm, or when engaged in study, there was a pensiveness in his eyes amounting even to langour, but the moment he spoke, their heaviness vanished, and if suddenly agitated the rapid transition was astonishing. The manner in which he was affected could instantly be discerned in his darting glance, which when kindled by anger seemed absolutely to flash fire, but when moved by less tumultuous passions, or when enjoying the sports of youthful revelry, there was a merry archness, a brilliant vivacity in his looks, which could not fail to excite a sympathy with his sensations, and an interest in his cause. To suppose that with such a countenance,

he could have a dull capacity, would be to imagine a spurious index had been added to nature's work ! Doubtless she sometimes gives a very inadequate idea through that means of what we are to expect on farther examination, when we are agreeably surprised to find so much more than we reckoned on ; but she seldom disappoints us by giving *less* than she promised ; though we are apt to imagine so, because we neglect accurately to inspect her productions before we form our decision.

Aretas, in mind and talents, as well as person, fully answered the sanguine expectations of his parents, over whom, even at that early age, he possessed extra-

ordinary influence, owing equally to the excess of their affection for him, and the many endearing virtues and qualifications he displayed. The mind of Horace was the very shadow of his friend's, as was natural from their close intimacy and similarity of education, and little difference could be discerned in their dispositions at this early period, but *that* which was the consequence of the contrast in their circumstances: Horace was not so decided or impetuous as his friend, nor did he betray by his behaviour that confidence of approbation, which was the inevitable result of the indulgence Aretas was secure of. Horace was a handsome lad, and though he could not quite equal the elegance of his prototype

in riding, dancing and fencing, he was not left behind, in Greek and Latin, nor in any of those studies essential to the profession it was intended he should embrace.

CHAPTER V.

SIR Henry Mansfield resolved to think no more of politics, at least for the present. The resolution was easily formed, but to keep it he found an impossibility; however he could at least refrain from interfering at all on subjects, it was out of his power to banish from his mind. He still heaved the sigh of unceasing regret for the premature setting of that sun which had given such splendor to his par-

ty, and the sting of private sorrow aggravated the wound inflicted by fallen consequence and depreciated influence. But the time was fast approaching, when the sigh of sorrow should be succeeded by that of renovated hope! when the grave, which only renders the talents and virtues of the friend more conspicuous, giving them a brighter and unfading hue, should display the extent of its charity to man, by quenching in its dark bosom every turbulent passion, and obliterating each cause of enmity, by for ever concealing the powerless object no longer capable of offending!

Scarcely had the smile of triumph, on the features of those who had so long vainly panted for distinction, subsided

into the complacency of confident security, when the basis of their new found honours was hurled to the dust, and the successor to that elevated situation (ambition's favourite aim) in the course of a few short months followed to the grave, him, who in life it had been his constant destiny to oppose ! Like the sickly moon, deprived of the glorious orb from which it had borrowed lustre, the lesser light faded away, and the political world seemed for awhile in total darkness ; save where some glimmering stars emitted a faint ray, and to whose uncertain gleam, time and experience alone could reconcile us ! Surely, never before in the space of so short a time was our island deprived of so many of its brightest ornaments. A Nelson ! a Pitt ! a Fox ! *one alone* would have been

sufficient to have immortalized the age he lived in! And shall not their premature deaths be ever reverted to, with sorrow and regret? and yet not *premature*, for “he, who has lived *well*, has lived long enough.” True, for *himself!* but not for the survivors! “Insatiate archer! could not one suffice! Thy shaft flew thrice—”

And thrice, and thrice again might we add, were we to enumerate the many persons of no small celebrity, who within the space of one melancholy year were called to render up their last account! It was a period marked by public lamentations and private tears! But enough.

Visions of ambition again floated in

the brain of sir Henry Mansfield, and various were the speculations that agitated his mind, while he remained during the summer apparently inactive at his country seat. Autumn advanced, and a dissolution of Parliament was confidently rumoured: sir Henry felt perfectly at his ease in the certainty that he should merely have to pass thro' the ceremony of re-election; nor could he admit a single doubt of the intentions and inclinations of his constituents. The report gained ground, and its veracity was speedily confirmed.

The candidates for the neighbouring boroughs were exerting all their influence, and the opposing parties endeavouring to secure their partisans by all the eloquence

of bribery, and the *unanswerable* arguments of good cheer.—Sir Henry laughed at their anxieties, and felicitated himself on his own good fortune, and the superior happiness and advantage he possessed in being secure of the suffrages of his supporters, thro' their affection for him, and not from their hopes of reward. He smiled around him as he sat in his elbow chair after dinner, and expatiated on the security and strength of that power whose source was in the hearts of those it governed, and observed how infinitely it surpassed that slender dominion that might be purchased over the venal. Sir Henry drank off his wine with increased complacency, and bade Aretas ring the bell. On the summons being answered, sir Henry said to the footman—“Run

down to Giles the blacksmith, and tell him I want to speak to him." Giles the blacksmith was also parish clerk. The servant disappeared and sir Henry continued.—

"I shall tell Giles to make it known that I shall have three public days immediately after the election, for all classes of people. I shall give no entertainments *before* it, for fear it should be imagined that I wished to bias the people. I would always be cautious of that!" He went on, addressing himself to his son.—"I would on no account appear to influence their judgments, even had I reason to doubt their inclinations, but which I am confident neither I nor any of my descendants will have cause to do. Their attachment to the fa-

mily is deeply rooted, nay it is a part of their very nature ! ”—The servant shortly returned with information that somewhat surprised and amused the Baronet—“ Please sir, Giles the blacksmith has got a large party to night.”

“ A party ! ” repeated sir Henry smiling, and added, turning to his lady—“ to tea and *cards* I suppose.” He continued to the servant—“ Well, is he come ? ”

“ No sir, if you please, I could only just get to speak to him, there was such drinking, and rioting, and singing—” “ Well, well, I don’t want to know the particulars.”

“ No sir, but if you please, Giles said he could not very well come up to night.”

" You mistake, the man never could have sent such a message ! he is the civilest fellow in the whole parish ! but it is no matter, I shall be going that way to-morrow, and I'll speak to him myself."— The servant left the room, and sir Henry added " Poor Giles is the humblest creature breathing, he would go down on his knees to one, if he thought he had given offence." " Aye that he would, I am sure," cried Aretas " and say *Amen!* to *every* thing. I don't like that man, he throws up his eyes so in church one can see nothing but the whites of them, and whenever he sees one, he heaps blessings on one till one is absolutely out of sight."

" That is a curious reason for disliking him !" observed sir Henry—" but as you

generally contrive to justify what you say,
I should be glad to know how you can
support this—”

“ O Sir, you know *one* blessing would
be quite enough ! repeating it so often is,
to *me* a convincing proof that he is con-
scious his sincerity might be justly ques-
tioned ! ”

“ You make me laugh boy ! to hear you
talk, one might suppose you an old fellow,
speaking from the experience of years.”—

CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT noon the next day, sir Henry mounted his horse, and accompanied by Aretas and Horace, set off for the neighbouring town, where he had some business to transact. Half a mile from the abbey stood the forge of Giles the blacksmith, by the road-side. Giles was in the act of shoeing a horse, when sir Henry appeared in sight, but he desisted not from his occupation, neither did he lift up

his eyes ; not even when the clattering of the horses feet sounded close to him. The baronet called to him, but he very composedly sliced off another piece of the hoof before he stood upright, when he moved his hat, but did not take it off.

Sir Henry was surprised, and Aretas involuntarily lifted his horse-whip, more than half inclined to knock the fellow's hat from his head, which without doubt he would have done had his father been absent, and Giles dared to treat even his youthful *dignity* with such *nonchalance*.

Sir Henry looked sternly at the man, and asked him in no very gentle tone, why he had not obeyed his summons on

the preceding evening. The blacksmith, long accustomed to bow obsequious to sir Henry's nod, and tremble at his frown, now, without being aware of it, and from force of habit, took off his hat and scraped his foot, as he stammered out "he did not know *as how* his worship wanted him *directly*."

"Be you at the abbey at six o'clock this evening, and there wait my command," said sir Henry as he rode off, without at all noticing the now repeated bows of the trembling Giles.

"*There* sir," cried Aretas as soon as they were out of hearing, "*there* sir, you see the fellow wants to be insolent, but has not courage to support him in it!"

This is the way he returns all your kindness to him! hypocritical, canting rascal; I should like to have broken my horse-whip over his back."

"Hush, hush, child," returned his father, "you mistake the man, *why* should he intend to be insolent to me? surely he was stupified! the effects of the last night's excess has probably confused his senses!"

It may be well imagined that the conduct or demeanour of so apparently insignificant a person as Giles the smith, could not make the impression of a moment on the *independent* sir Henry Mansfield, nor *would* it but for one circumstance; Giles was a freeholder! and not only commanded several votes him-

self, but had three sons settled, who were also burgesses, and this gave Giles the smith a *weight* outbalancing all the iron in his shop.

Sir Henry rode forward in thoughtful mood, and was provoked with himself on finding that Giles continued to occupy his imagination, and that he had actually been calculating in his own mind how many votes Giles could be said to possess. "Of what consequence is it?" he mentally exclaimed, "My dominion here is so thoroughly established that no one would ever think of setting themselves up in opposition to me, convinced as they must be of the issue of the contest?" He now perceived two farmers advancing along the road, men of some

influence in the parish. They suddenly turned up a lane leading from the highway, and this trifling circumstance, which at another time would have passed totally unheeded by sir Henry, now occasioned him an uneasy sensation, from the supposition which instantly suggested itself, that these men had turned out of the road purposely to avoid meeting him.

He reached the town in rather a gloomy humour, undisturbed by the garrulity of his companions, who were never at a loss for conversation. There seemed an unusual bustle in the generally quiet streets, which they soon perceived was occasioned by a party of gentlemen, (or rather *men*) who were parading up and down, talking to one

person, shaking hands with another, and addressing a third with a confidential air of secrecy; and at the head of this posse appeared Mr. Anthony Greaves, the 'squire of Turnpenny Hall.

Sir Henry felt startled, a deeper glow suffused his countenance, he erected himself on his saddle, and his naturally majestic air, perfectly corresponded with the commanding look and lofty independence that marked his features as he passed the loquacious group, without deigning to cast a glance towards them. But the boys, curious to know the cause of this assemblage, rather loitered, and heard some one observe, "There is sir Henry! no doubt he has heard of the new candidate!" the youths exchanged

looks of indignation, but were prudent enough not to repeat this intelligence to sir Henry, till they were out of sight of the party, which they now naturally concluded was formed of his opponents. Aretas then rode up to his father, with burning cheeks and eyes flashing fire, as he said——“ Pray, sir, did you hear what one of those fellows had the impudence to observe?”

“ No, what did he say ?” “ He supposed you had heard of the *new* candidate.”

Sir Henry forced a laugh, as he returned, “ I guessed as much ! I am very glad of it ; that foolish Anthony Greaves is the man I have no doubt ; he does not

know what to do with his money, and he has taken an excellent method of getting rid of it: he could not oblige me more than by furnishing the people with this opportunity of evincing their attachment to me."

'Though sir Henry spoke thus, very different were his feelings to what his words implied: not that he entertained any apprehensions of being successfully opposed, but he was annoyed beyond measure, that such a low-life fellow, as he esteemed Greaves, should presume to set himself up in opposition to *him*. He could not but be aware of the influence his extensive possessions gave the quondam soap-boiler, and he now recollects that he had lately erected divers small tene-

ments on his estate, attaching sufficient land to them to give the occupants a voice at the election : his motive for this was now sufficiently evident, as was also the occasion of Giles the smith's unusual behavior.

Sir Henry hastened to execute the business that had brought him to the town, feeling in no humour to return the obsequious obeisance of his trades-people, with that conciliating graciousness he thought it prudent at the present juncture to display, and soon set out on his return. They were repassing a narrow street, which the beforementioned party were now perambulating, when Aretas suddenly recollected something that he wanted to purchase, and he requested his father to

ride on, while he and Horace returned for it. No sooner had they parted from sir Henry, than Aretas exclaimed, “ I am resolved to have some fun at the expense of these fellows ! the mud is a foot deep in this lane, and as soon as papa’s out of sight we’ll gallop after him, as fast as the horses can lay legs to the ground. I’ll change the colour of their coats for them, RASCALS ! and save them the trouble of doing it themselves.”

Horace applauded the scheme with all his heart, and having just turned out of the lane, in order that their intention might not be too apparent, they re-entered it again, and putting spurs to their horses’ sides they scampered at full speed through the deepest of the mud, sending

it in showers in every direction, and passing so very close to the obnoxious individuals, as to leave them absolutely streaming with the pestiferous contents of the overflowing gutters.

It may be concluded the young gentlemen did not escape unspotted themselves, on the contrary, there was scarcely a part of their dress that did not display the consequences of this truly *boyish* trick : but that they regarded not at all, while in peals of laughter they gave vent to their mirth.

"By Jove!" cried Aretas, "we have effectually bedawbed the old soap-boiler, and his crew ! I actually saw his mouth full of it ! he was just holding forth,

on a broad grin when *bang* went a large lump of mud right in his teeth! Upon my honor I thought I should have expired with laughing! I'll teach the old *tallow-chandler* how to set up for a gentleman! but not a word of this to papa, or we shall have a lecture five hours long,"—"Trust me for that!" returned Horace, "but see what figures we are, he will guess we have been at some mischief." "O no, he will think we were in a hurry to overtake him! O, how Constance, and the girls, (meaning his sisters) will laugh when we tell them what rare fun we have had."

They soon overtook Sir Henry, who did not trouble them with any minute inquiries respecting their spattered ap-

pearance, his mind being occupied with a more important subject.

On repassing the forge, they again perceived Giles near the entrance, and he was making the best of his way into his house, which was adjacent, when Sir Henry arrested his progress, by accosting him, which he did in a mild tone, and relaxed features, saying—"Giles don't forget what I told you about coming to the Abbey this evening; I have something very particular to say to you, I want to consult you about some new iron rails I wish to have put up, and which I think you could do for me; though it is not exactly in your line, but it is a job that will put some money in your pocket, and I like to employ my

neighbours in preference to sending for strangers."

Giles was again apparently all civility and obsequiousness ; the extraordinary condescension, and even *friendliness* of Sir Henry's manner, so opposite to the commanding tone in which he had addressed him, when he had before passed, made the smith feel, he knew not how, and he twiddled the edge of his hat, and stroked his head, without being able to utter a single word. Sir Henry continued—" You were very gay last night, I understand Giles ; your wedding day I suppose, or your eldest son's birthday !" Giles simpered, and at length spoke—" No, please your worship, it was not that neither, only just a few

friends *like* got together to be merry. 'Squire Greaves, Sir, up at the hall, he sent me a dozen of some fine sort of wine, rare stout to be sure ; he is a mighty free gentleman, he is indeed, for he came and broached it himself, and made us all as merry as grigs ; yes indeed, just like one of us, he was as hearty, and good natured all the time."

" Well Giles," said the Baronet, " you will be still merrier, I hope, next week ; there will be open house at the Abbey from Monday next, till after the election, I hope to see all my friends about me."

Sir Henry rode on, while his companions marvelled within themselves at hearing him announce it his intention to

keep open house from the ensuing Monday till *after* the election, (the day of which was not yet fixed) when only the preceding night he had declared a directly contrary resolution, and had moreover observed, that *such* would also be his line of conduct, *even* had he reason to doubt the inclinations of the people ! However *that* was a situation in which Sir Henry had never been placed, and therefore (as people are very apt to do in similar cases) he spoke very confidently of *how* he should act under such circumstances ; but how erroneous is our judgment of things only seen at a distance, and how greatly we deceive ourselves respecting their effect on a nearer approach, Sir Henry's conduct on the present occasion strikingly exemplified.

Very little reflection sufficed to convince him that at this juncture, he ought rather to endeavour to conciliate, than irritate by a haughty demeanor and resentful carriage: he was ignorant what power Greaves might have attained in the borough, or how far he might have ingratiated himself with the lower orders of the people, by associating with them, and making them presents.

Sir Henry had ever considered Greaves as so insignificant a being, that he paid not the least attention to his actions or conduct; he had heard that he kept low company, but of his views in so doing, he had never entertained the slightest suspicion; they were now sufficiently apparent, and how far they had succeeded Sir Henry had yet to learn.

Aretas was provoked that his father should have spoken so civilly to Giles, but he was shrewd enough to suspect the motive, which rather increased than diminished his resentment against the blacksmith, on whom he mentally vowed vengeance if he proved an apostate to his father's cause. This, became no longer a matter of doubt, when the evening passed away, and Giles did not appear at the Abbey.

CHAPTER VII.

THE course of a few days gave to the face of affairs a very decided aspect, and it was obvious that Mr. Anthony Greaves had employed his golden talisman to some purpose, and had succeeded in exciting a considerable opposition to Sir Henry, who nevertheless retained too strong a party to make the issue of the contest doubtful. He was secure of all the most respectable freeholders, and it was only

amongst the lowest order, whose poverty gave weight to Mr. Greaves's *metallic influence*, that this favorite of Mammon could boast any ascendancy; but the moment he attempted to circulate it through more creditable channels, he became aware of its *depreciation of currency*. Yet Mr. Anthony Greaves was sanguine, and at all events he had the satisfaction of thinking that he annoyed Sir Henry beyond measure, and this *laudable* motive, was doubtless the primary cause which prompted him to dispute with the baronet the possession of those honours he had so long enjoyed. He was encouraged in his design by his son, who had just left college, and was come down to Turnpenny hall, in order to exert himself at the present important crisis, not

doubting that if his father obtained the representation of the borough, by *purchasing* the suffrages of his constituents, he himself, should at some future period **GLORIOUSLY assert its INDEPENDENCE.**

This aspiring youth was now about three and twenty, of the middle stature, extremely emaciated, and the pallid hue of his haggard countenance would have been ghastly, had it not been for the *roseate* irruption, which kindly supplied the place of the roses of health, that had been sacrificed at the shrine of dissipation. He left the university with something less of mental acquirements than he had taken there, and unfortunately he had at no time had many to spare, and all that he derived from his residence at

the seat of science, and fountain of learning, was a debilitated frame and broken constitution. This hopeful son, was the active supporter of his august papa, in the arduous undertaking he was now engaged in, while Giles, the sanctified son of the bellows, was the 'squire's warm auxiliary, and decked in blue ribbons, and stuck over with emblematic devices, he paraded the town, and its vicinity, from morning till night, roaring—“Greaves, for ever! down with the Mansfields! Greaves I say, Greaves for ever; success to the 'squire of Turnpenny hall.”

This fellow, accustomed from childhood to respect and venerate the noble family he now persecuted with all his

little might, still felt so great an awe of sir Henry, (whose father he had served, even before the present baronet had been in existence) that he could not, though fully inclined, maintain a sullen and uncivil demeanor in his presence, though intending to swerve from his former allegiance, being completely suborned by the presents, promises, and familiarity of Greaves.

It required not the notoriety, which Giles by his noise and violence speedily acquired, to remind Aretas of the vengeance he meditated against him ; and he and Horace together formed a scheme which they thought likely to effect their purpose, at least as far as arousing the conscience of the apostate, and ter-

rifying him to the last degree. In his road to Turnpenny hall, whither he nightly repaired, Giles was obliged to cross the village church-yard, where his *first* wife (for he had now a second) was buried; a stone had been erected to her memory at the expense of Lady Mansfield, whom she had nursed as an infant, and with whom she had ever after continued a great favourite. The boys resolved to station themselves behind this stone, and as Giles advanced along the path in his way from Turnpenny hall, rise gradually up; and acting the ghost of his departed wife, accost him in such language as they thought suited to the occasion, and which they doubted not would have its full effect on the terror stricken blacksmith.

Why it should require *both* of them to personate one individual may appear absurd enough, and savor a little of cowardice; but the dread of resorting to the church-yard *singly* was not the motive that actuated this arrangement, though certainly either would have been deprived of half the amusement he promised himself, had the other been absent: but the presence of *both* was requisite to give due effect to their plan, for although the blacksmith's wife had been of diminutive stature, they conceived it quite essential that her *spirit* should appear *tall!* for, who ever heard of a *short* ghost? the idea was perfectly ridiculous; at least so thought Aretas, and his companion, who perhaps imagined death could add a few cubits to the stature, or

with greater probability, did not trouble themselves to reflect any farther on the subject, than to determine what description of figure would produce the strongest degree of terror. It was therefore decided that Aretas should mount the shoulders of his friend, and that a long sheet, depending from his head, should envelope them both, concealing the ridiculous union, and presenting the semblance of one gigantic figure.

Having fully digested the scheme, and repeatedly rehearsed the expected scene, (Aretas acting the ghost, and Horace, Giles) they no longer deferred putting it in execution, and a few days previous to the election, having from a covert watched Giles making his way to

wards Turnpenny, they fixed on *that*, for the eventful night, and while the family believed they were gone to spend the evening at Mrs. Hamilton's, they sallied down to the church-yard. Aretas had the sheet twisted round his body, under his great coat, while Horace bore a sufficiently hideous mask, which was to be assumed, though certainly not *perfectly* calculated to represent a *female*, as it was one sir Henry had worn at a masquerade in the character of a *Jew Rabbi!* but they felt confident that Giles's terror would so far blind him, as to prevent his discovering that the appendage of a venerable *beard* had improved his wife's beauty since she had inhabited other worlds !

They bounded forward, elate with the idea of the *fun* they promised themselves, and soon reached the church-yard, rejoicing in the pale beams of a partially obscured moon, so favorable to the deception they were about to practice.

They repaired to the church porch, and there seated themselves, aware that it was yet too early to expect Giles's return: but their impatience would not permit them to remain long inactive, and they began pulling about the sheet, and trying on the mask, when a sudden rumbling noise startled them both. "What was that?" cried Horace, with quickness, in a half whisper.

"Surely you are not frightened!" said Aretas, in the same tone.—"Frightened!" echoed Horace, with some warmth, as assuming an undaunted air he stepped outside the porch. "I don't mean afraid of *ghosts*," said Aretas, as he followed him, "but I thought you might apprehend a surprise from some person."—"So I do; I am sure I heard something in the *charnel* house."

"Hush," cried Aretas, drawing him back into the porch—"see, it is the old sexton! he has been putting his spade away! there was a funeral to night, I heard the knell."

"Was there indeed? who was it I wonder!"

"I don't know, I am sure, but I dare say it was old Tabitha White, whom we used to buy the *lollipops* of when we were children; you know she died a few days ago." "Ah, poor old Tabby! it was but last Sunday I saw her at church—but come, let us begin to dress *up*, perhaps the old soap-boiler will send Giles home sooner than usual."—"Aye, do let us be doing something, I hate standing here idle." The sexton had been quitting the church-yard at the moment the youths had espied him, and now all was again quiet.

Aretas tied on the mask, and putting the sheet over his head, held the remainder up round him and proceeded towards the grave of "Sarah the wife of Thomas

Giles," as the inscription on the stone bespoke it to be. They were close to it, though a large yew tree concealed it from their view, when suddenly turning full upon it, what was their astonishment, and we must add, dismay ! when they actually beheld a female form bending over it ! they started back several paces, but slight was the terror they experienced, in comparison to that they occasioned, or rather Aretas, whose strange figure was already sufficiently terrific to affect feminine nerves. With reiterated shrieks of almost frantic fear, the lady flew from the spot, no doubt conceiving herself pursued by the object of her apprehensions, whose feelings, as well as those of his friend, had undergone a complete revolution, and they endured the utmost

anxiety lest the terror they had occasioned might be productive of serious consequences.

Their eyes followed the fugitive, but they dared not pursue her from a dread of increasing her fears, and they were just going to call to her, in order, at least, to convince her that they were *human*, when her rapid progress was impeded by a man entering the gate that led from the road across the church-yard. The velocity with which she proceeded, precipitated her almost into his arms, and they heard her distinctly ejaculate, "O save me ! save me ! I am pursued. Protect me for mercy's sake, whoever you are!"—The person she had addressed, replied, "Don't be alarmed,

“don’t be alarmed fair lady ! you are safe with me, depend on it ; pray let me support you till you recover yourself a little.”

A new alarm now assailed the boys, who became apprehensive lest the lady’s protector should take upon him to ascertain the identity of the person who had thus terrified her, and with one accord they shrunk down behind the head stone, hoping to escape unobserved ; they were too far from the porch to attempt secreting themselves within it, and perdue in their concealment, they heard the words that passed between the affrighted damsel, and the knight errant that had so seasonably made his appearance.

Aretas vainly endeavoured to disengage himself from the sheet, which he had secured so firmly for fear of its slipping off during the *performance*, as to render it no easy matter to extricate himself from it, and in his eagerness to untie the mask he had drawn the strings into a hard knot, so that *had* he been surprised, he must inevitably have been discovered as the principal in this ridiculous scene. The lady now again addressed her supporter, saying

“ O stranger, speak ! inform me I implore you who it is that has so miraculously started forth, to succour and protect the persecuted, fear stricken, Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron ?”

The boys pressed closer to each other, and with the utmost difficulty resisted bursting into a fit of laughter, while the person interrogated, replied in pompous terms, “*I, ma’am, am Peter Greaves, Esq.*; and have the honor of being the only son of the great Anthony Greaves, now just about to obtain a seat in parliament.”—“Are you so!” whispered Aretas, “then by heavens! I’ll try what sort of nerves you have got, come what will of it. I would lay a wager he runs away, and leaves the fair *Alex-sianigander* to her fate.”

With these words he jumped on Horace’s shoulders, adding—“Now, when I stick my heels into you, you must rise slowly up; at all events we

are two to one against the tallow-chandler."

Accordingly as the lady, supported by her companion, again advanced along the path, which both were obliged to re-cross in their way home, the terrific figure gradually arose in full view! Again a shriek of horror *rent* the air, and Alexandrina would instantly have fainted, had she not found the arm that encircled her suddenly withdrawn, and suspected that she might be permitted to fall prostrate on the ground if she chose it, as the movement of her *protector* seemed to indicate an intention of taking to his heels with all imaginable speed. She instantly resolved not to be left behind to the mercy of the fiend, ghost, gob-

lin, or whatever it might be ; and in a few moments gained the outside of the church-yard ; while her *gallant conductor*, after the first start and involuntary action that denoted an inclination to fly, rallied his scared senses, and made a *stand* in order to take a second glance at the appalling object, while he stammered out — “ Wha—wha—wha—what the d—l are you ? ” The figure bowed its head towards him, and he moved rapidly forward a few paces, yet endeavoured to check himself, ashamed of the sensation that impelled him on. Aretas, perceiving it was no difficult matter to frighten him, instantly formed the design of pursuing him, and in a half whisper bade Horace run forward, which he attempted to do, but had proceeded but a

few steps, when blinded by the sheet, he stumbled over a grave, and unable from the weight on his shoulders to recover his balance he fell, and sent his burthen flying over the head of the *pursued*, which together with a severe blow he received from the struggling legs of the flying ghost, brought his terrors to a climax, and furnished his heels with wings that bore him from the spot with the velocity of a Mercury.

Meantime Aretas, though precipitated to the ground with so much violence, escaped unhurt, and after lying prostrate for a few moments to indulge a hearty fit of laughter, he sprung up, and Horace rejoining him, they hastened to resume their station in order to be ready

to receive Giles, trusting that young Greaves would be too much ashamed of his own fears to inform Giles (should he encounter him) of what had occurred in the church-yard: such a communication would have completely frustrated their scheme. Aretas now proposed that Horace should be *uppermost*; but Horace, as in every other instance, continued resolute in being the *supporter* of his friend, and preferred acting the foundation to the figure, who was required to perform a more arduous part. At length a heavy, but uneven footstep, announced the approach of Giles, who soon identified himself by exclaiming, as he reeled along, “Greaves for ever! Greaves, I say Greaves!”—“*Graves!*” echoed a voice, almost close to him: Giles was struck

motionless, and in one moment sobered ;
the voice continued

“ Thomas Giles ! Thomas Giles !
Thomas Giles ! Why callest thou upon
the *graves* ? but they shall open at thy
command ! Behold me, Thomas ! behold
thy wretched wife, whose spirit thou hast
disturbed, and caused to appear again on
this earth.”

The spectre slowly rose from the grave
of the departed Sarah, the wife of Thomas
Giles, whose horror struck spouse utter-
ing a sound, partaking of a yell and a
groan, *harmonizing* in uncouth *melody*
somewhat resembling an Irish howl, sunk
on his knees, unable to withdraw his eyes
from the object on which they seemed
spell bound by terror.

“ O, Thomas, Thomas !” again spoke the ghost—“ Thou hast greatly sinned ! and for thy monstrous wickedness I cannot rest in my grave, but am doomed to haunt thee from the setting of the sun until the rising again of the same, for thy foul iniquity and ingratitude !”

“ O Lord ! O Lord, O Lord !” now ejaculated the paralyzed blacksmith — “ What have I done that should bring this great punishment on me ? to see thee O Sally again in this world ! O Sally, Sally, go into your grave again, and I will do any thing you tell me, only go into your grave again and be quiet, and never never come out no more ! for the love of mercy ! O Sally lie still, lie still there, O do you pray ?”

The spectre again spoke with trembling voice also, for the irresistible inclination to mirth, so violently shook the *base* of the figure, as to give that which surmounted it, a sensation similar to what is produced by an earthquake. “No Giles!”—it said—“never till thou hast cleansed thyself from thy vile and abominable sin, that crime worse than the sin of witchcraft, shall I lie down at peace in my grave! O thou wretch! legions of devils wait for thy soul, and they shall pinch thee with red hot tongs, and toss thee on pitchforks, and hammer thee to a mummy on thine own anvil, if thou doest not for ever forswear the villainous cause thou hast espoused and—” The ghost was here a little at a loss for words, and rapidly concluded this *horrific* speech

with—"and, leaving the rascally old soap-boiler, give all your votes to sir Henry Mansfield!"

Giles was now alarmed to that pitch, that it mattered not how he was addressed, he had completely lost the power of discriminating, and could barely comprehend ; he had fallen flat on his face, and in reply to the *ghostly counsel* he could only stutter out, "I wol—I wol!—I wol." "Swear then ! for hark—the devils from the bowels of the earth are howling for your soul !" Horace loudly roared. Giles gave a responsive groan, and recoiled from the ground with a convulsive heave, as he cried out—"O spare me, spare me ! I swear, I do swear I will serve sir Henry to the day of doom,

and cry Mansfield for ever and ever, world without end—Amen !”

“ O, go then, Thomas Giles, my husband! depart in peace, and perform thy oath, so shall my spirit find rest; but so sure as thou failest, so sure shall I again appear unto thee even till thou hast done as I command thee.”

Giles again groaned assent, but dared not raise his eyes, and long before he ventured to look up, the *disunited figure*, separated into its original division, had by the help of its two pair of legs nearly gained the Abbey, to which the young impostors returned, triumphing in the success of their scheme; while the intrepid Mr. Greaves *junior*, soon overtook

the flying Alexandrina, who was in the habit of frequenting the church-yard, and other romantic spots by moon-light, actuated probably by the thirst for adventure.

A few moments reflection sufficed to convince Greaves that his alarm had been occasioned by a spirit embodied in a very substantial form, with which, had he acted like a man, he ought most certainly to have made a trial of his strength; but this he felt no inclination to do, yet resolved not to lose the credit of having done so; he therefore assured the fair fugitive that her fears had been occasioned by some malicious person stationed in the church-yard, no doubt for the express purpose of alarming the

passengers, but that he had chastised them severely, and could answer for it they would not be troublesome in future.

He saw the lady safe home, owing to which he missed Giles, who having laid perfectly still in the church-yard, undisturbed by any noise for about half an hour, began to hope that his wife had gone quietly to rest again, and *devoutly* praying she never more might rise, he ventured to look up, and perceiving no vestiges of the horrible vision, he crawled from the church-yard and proceeded homeward, fully resolved to comply with the conditions which were to secure him from the future intrusions of so unwelcome a visitor.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR Henry was somewhat surprised the ensuing day, by the receipt of a most extraordinary billet from Giles, delivered by one of his sons. It was directed “To the most honourable and worshipful sir Henry Mansfield, baron-night and justice of the peace, and lord of the manor, and seventeen years member of the parliament *in the Borough of—*” the contents ran as follows :

" I Thomas Giles, forty years blacksmith of this here village, twenty-eight years parish clerk, and seventeen years the staunch servant and voter for the present baron-night, and for twelve years before the same to his noble father, during all that long time no one daring to set themselves up to oppose the said noble personages ; I do hereby confess my great iniquity and guilt, in having been tempted by Satan to leave the true cause, and run after vain things. I do humbly pray that his worshipful baron-night-ship will be mercifully pleased to accept my repentance with a *plumper*, which I hereby swear to give unto him on the day of election, as well as the *plumpers* of my three sons, Joseph, Jeremiah and Daniel, lawfully begotten by

Sarah my wife, (God ! rest her soul in this world and the next,) being heirs of my body, and issue of her loins, as the church register will shew if required. And I do hereby also swear never to cry out on Greaves no more, *nor none* of that vile deceitful crew, who go about speaking lies, and privily lurking in secret places to see whom they may devour. But for fear of the wicked one, these my righteous intentions must no more be published until that day when the wicked shall be confounded, and we will all cry out boldly, a plumper for sir Henry. So no more at present from your faithful servant and well wisher, from henceforth and for ever,

THOMAS GILES, Parish clerk."

What miracle had wrought such a sudden and total change in the sentiments and intentions of Giles, sir Henry was wholly at a loss to conceive, and though secure in the superior strength of his party, owing to which the votes Giles could command, were not of essential consequence, he yet felt pleased at an accumulation of numbers that denoted his extensive influence. He indulged a hearty laugh over Giles's penitential epistle, which he read aloud to the boys, and which excited in them an excess of mirth that absolutely convulsed them for some minutes, though the real cause of this, they took good care not to divulge.

Giles took to his bed, and affected

illness, which accounted for the sudden cessation of his active exertions in behalf of Mr. Greaves, who never suspected the recreant blacksmith, (whom he had loaded with innumerable proofs of his bounty, and from whom he had received the most solemn promises of strict allegiance,) of an intention to desert his cause.

CHAPTER IX.

THE day of the election at length arrived: we shall not enter into particulars on this occasion, which as the issue of the contest was by no means doubtful, would probably prove tedious, but we must not omit a speech which Mr. Anthony Greaves delivered from the hustings, at the close of the first day's poll, as it will doubtless convey a very adequate idea of his patriotism, and must have im-

pressed every hearer with a due sense of his intellectual attainments, the soundness of his judgment, and strength of his oratorical powers.

The Speech of Mr. Anthony Greaves.

“ Gentlemen, gentlemen I say, now I would not have you think that I am disheartened because my opponent can count a few more votes than I can to day, for you *see* this is only the first day you *know*, and so there is no cause to be down the mouth so soon! We’ll brow beat him by and by, I’ll warrant you so long as you don’t *flinch*, that is none of you that have promised to *stick* by me.”

“I am above self-interestgentlemen, I am a true patriot! all that I want is Parliamen-

tary reform ! all that I want to be in parliament for is to stand up for your rights ! aye, to see you righted gentlemen, and not to let you be bamboozled out of your money by these scandalous and unnecessary taxes, that will drain your last farthing from you, and all to put into the pockets of the r—c—ly m—s—rs, who would keep you up to your ears in blood for what they call a *just* and necessary war.

“ The country must be ruined, yes *I* say it, the country must fall ! your property is devoured to give *pensions* to the minions of the state ; exert yourselves, gentlemen, exert yourselves, and save the sinking state by returning such members to parliament as can, and will effect a revolution in such a system of ruination.

" Reform, gentlemen, reform in parliament is what is wanted! *free election* gentlemen, no bribery, no *corruption*! consult your own judgments gentlemen, and you will see, you will see, I say you will at once *see* gentlemen the necessity of parliamentary reform, and by your free voices returning such a member as you know *will* see you righted, you will remove this intolerable burthen from your shoulders, or I should rather say your purses, that your unjust oppressors load you with.

" Liberty of the press, gentlemen, parliamentary reform, *free election*, that is the thing! let this be brought about, kick out the system of corruption, and then you may boast of your *liberty*!

then you will be a free people in right earnest, now you only *call* yourselves so, while the truth is, you are more enslaved than the meanest man in Bonaparte's dominions. Let them make peace with him, let them make peace again with him before it is too late, or he will make his own terms. We are going down hill full gallop, aye we are all tumbling over each other helter-skelter, but what care they? The d—l take the hindmost is their cry, and each scrambles which shall be first.

“ But gentlemen,” continued Mr. Greaves, as he repeatedly wiped the perspiration from his face, “ The patriot, the true patriot shall save his country! you are all patriots gentlemen, and by

electing me your representative, you will prove yourselves to be such, for I shall be a staunch supporter of your prerogatives ! free election gentlemen, no bribery, no corruption ! parliamentary reform, *that* alone can save the country."

Such was the speech delivered by Mr. Anthony Greaves to the worthy and independent electors, his constituents, who had every one of them been *bought over* to his side.

Reform ! Reform ! was now the cry of all Mr. Greaves's party, and the whole town echoed with the vociferations of the mobility exclaiming against bribery and corruption, and calling out for parliamentary reform, and free election.

Two of the 'squire's partizans who were most violent and turbulent in his support, were perambulating the streets, to the great annoyance of the peaceable passengers, whom they continually impeded in their progress, to demand of what party they were, when they chanced to encounter a respectable tradesman, whom they accosted with the popular cry, adding, "Are you for reform in parliament?" He being an intelligent man resolved to find out whether they were not themselves (as has frequently been found to be the case with such boisterous assailants,) ignorant of the very meaning of the term, which seemed to be the watch word among them.

"Reform," repeated the tradesman,
"I don't know what you mean."

"Why *parliamentary* reform," cried the first fellow. "Well, and what is parliamentary reform?" asked the tradesman, "You must explain to me what it is before I can pretend to approve of it."

"Why, what is it," returned the same man.

"Why reform in parliament to be sure, that's what it is."

"Well, but what is to be *reformed*?"

"What is to be reformed? O, why—why—hang me if I know! but—*reform* is what is wanted, that is it I know! reform, reform! I say." "Why Jack, what a booby thou art," cried his com-

panion, who while this dialogue had been passing, had for the *first* time in his life been considering what reform in parliament really meant, “the gentleman may well ask, to be sure, it is but right and reasonable folks should know what they are talking about ; thou art a right dunderhead to be calling out for what thou dost not understand : why man I’ll tell you now, *reform* as they say, why reform means as how to grow better you know. When a man is a wicked man, and then gets good all of a sudden, why then, as the parson says he is *reformed*, and that to be sure is clear enough, and them there members of the parliament house, are such a pack of wicked fellows that no good can come till they are made

better, and that is the meaning of *reform*, plain enough to be sure."

"Aye, I dare say it is," cried Jack ; "But hang me if I care whether it is or not. I say reform! reform, parliamentary reform!" A third of Greaves's constituents, who had joined the other two, while they had been parleying with the tradesman, (who still continued with them,) now with an air of self-sufficiency, and sneering most contemptuously on the others, exclaimed, "Why what a couple of ignoramuses you are ! I am ashamed to hear you talk so ; not so much as to know what you are crying out for ; but thank God ! I *larnt* my book by times as I may say, and many is the time when my old school mistress has praised me

when I was *a* reading all about my own country, for not to know *that* is to know nothing, as you may say, and to be sure I could tell all the kings and queens, one after *t'other* as quick as two-pence ; aye, and then I *larnt* all about reformation, which is all one as reform in parliament, it was all along of old Harry that it came about ; aye, if old Harry was but at the head of us now, we would soon have a reform in parliament again I'll warrant you."

" Why you seem to be very intimate with old *Harry*," cried a wag, who with several other persons had now gathered round the eloquent speaker, " I should like to know what *he* has to do with *reform* of any kind."

" Why thou numscull ! dost not thou know so much as *that* ? Why was not it not old Harry the eighth that brought about the reformation ? and did not he reform himself on purpose that he might get rid of his old wife, and have a new one, and send all the Papists to the d—l ? And that is why none of them *can't* sit in our parliament house, till they are all reformed, and *that* is what we mean when we call out for reform in parliament ! No popery ! parliamentary reform I say."

This learned speech seemed to make very little impression on the majority of the hearers; but one who did not like the arrogant tone of the speaker, and who thought himself much the wisest of the two, now delivered his opinion on the

subject, feeling confident that he alone was in the right. " I am sorry to find gentlemen, that you seem all one as ignorant as *t'other* on this here subject ; so just that you may not shame your party, I'll take upon me to make you a little wiser on that there *score* ! you talks of reform in parliament, when all the while you don't know what it means ; why then I'll tell you ! why it means that men should not sneak in to parliament, nobody knows how, as sir Henry Mansfield and many others do, and just get to be members for nothing at all, and without its costing them a halfpenny ! It *bant* fair by no manner of means, it *bant* I say when it costs others thousands and thousands ! it is a vile abuse of our privileges and cheating us out of our rights ; and *bant*

we a *free* people, then to be sure we have a *right* to be paid for our good will, or where is our liberty. I say it is nothing less than a monstrous imposition! a right down cheat, for a man for to go for to stick himself up for a member of parliament, without its costing him a farthing! It is defrauding *of* the people I say, and they may well cry out for reform in parliament, and that will never come to pass till a borough is put *fairly* up to *auction*, and *bid* for openly and honourably, and let him who bids *highest* get it, say I! and that is my opinion of parliamentary reform, and I'll cry out for it as long as I live! Why have not I for years and years given my votes to sir Henry Mansfield for nothing at all? Why it is a crying shame and never

will I do so *no more*, while there is a man living that will *buy* them: no, I am for parliamentary reform. No bribery! no corruption I say, all fair and above board; let the borough be put up to auction, and what it *fetches* be fairly divided among the Burghers; there will never be no parliamentary reform till that there comes to pass."

The respectable tradesman whose progress had been impeded by the vociferous cry of these patriotic reformists, was permitted to proceed without farther molestation, on his echoing the popular exclamation, which he did very sincerely, mentally deplored the utter impossibility of such a *reform* as the expression was meant to convey, while ignorance, ava-

rice and self-interest presented an insurmountable bar to its success.

Having shewn how far the constituents of Mr. Anthony Greaves understood the nature of those principles which they supported with so much noise and violence, we shall forbear to follow that *patriot*, or his opponent sir Henry Mansfield in their political career; suffice it to say the latter was duly elected; nor was the surprize of the former, inferior to his disappointment and rage, when he found that Giles the blacksmith, that very important personage, had suddenly deserted his cause, and together with all those under his influence, declared himself in favour of the adversary.

CHAPTER X.

WE shall now pass over three years that elapsed unmarked by any event worthy of being recorded. The greater part of that time was spent by Aretas and Horace at college. Mrs Hamilton by the practice of strict economy, was enabled to permit her son to spend a few years at a university, which was essential to the profession he was destined to embrace, and having impressed his mind with a due sense of

the necessity of his conducting his expenses with the utmost circumspection, she trusted he would be able to resist the temptations to extravagance by which he would be surrounded. Nor did Horace experience those mortifications too frequently the attendants of poverty, for he was still the constant companion of young Mansfield, whose income was not restricted to any stated sum, for though he had a *nominal* allowance, his father ever cheerfully complied with his utmost demands on him.

Horace had the use of his friend's horses and equipage, and he was addicted to no expensive pleasures, calculated to involve him in embarrassments. How eagerly were the vacations antici-

pated by these two young men ! Each thought of those with an equal degree of interest, though neither suspected that the other was attracted by a *peculiar* charm, towards the residence of their friends ; while in reality their juvenile hearts were both equally under the dominion of a similar sentiment, and this perhaps was the only secret they retained from each other. Their silence on the subject arose from very obvious reasons : Aretas, who from childhood had indulged and nourished an attachment for the sister of his friend, dared not confide to him the nature of his regard for her, believing he would conceive himself in honour bound to acquaint his mother with the truth ; and that she, from the dread of appearing ungrateful to sir Henry, would

take effectual steps to prevent her daughter ever interfering with the baronet's views ; and thus the intimacy between the families would doubtless be interrupted, and perhaps entirely dissolved. The bare suggestion gave Aretas extreme pain : little accustomed to opposition, he could ill have brooked it in so tender a point, and he flattered himself that through the influence he was conscious he possessed over his father, he should by degrees succeed in obtaining his sanction to his wishes, though they were at present so inimical to his own.

Horace on the other hand had been unable to withstand the charms of Miss Mansfield, and had (as was natural at the age when the heart is most suscepti-

ble,) resigned himself to the dominion of this passion, which had been engendered and nurtured by a domestication in the family of his patron. But the farthest thing from his thoughts was to requite the infinite obligation he owed sir Henry, by studiously seeking to ingratiate himself into his daughter's affections ; but the footing they had been on, even from infancy, banished all distance or reserve in their manner towards each other, and was calculated to conceal even from themselves the species of regard that influenced them, and very effectually blinded every one else. It was not likely that at nineteen, Horace should be capable of making any vigorous effort to get the better of his attachment ; on the contrary, he would have thought it little less than sacrilege to

have admitted the possibility of its diminution, though honour and gratitude must ever condemn him to silence in regard to his sentiments even to his dearest friend, who was too nearly allied to the object of his affections to be intrusted with his confidence. Horace, thus romantically fancied that he was resigning himself very *heroically* to the misery of a hopeless passion, while, unconsciously, hopes somewhat unreasonable found place in his breast, on the flattering suggestion that the fair one was not indifferent to him, and that sir Henry, who had hitherto shewn such zeal in promoting his welfare, might be induced at some future period to permit his daughter to share the fate of his *protégée*.

Under the influence of the feelings I have above described, it may be well imagined, Aretas and Horace hailed as a jubilee the period of their return to the Abbey; nor were the pleasurable sensations they experienced superior to those their presence excited in the hearts of their relatives and friends.

Miss Mansfield was now about eighteen, her sister two years younger: they were neither of them paragons of beauty, but both were very pretty unaffected girls, tolerably accomplished, and well informed on all those subjects which real gentlewomen ought to be capable of conversing on. Scarcely had Aretas joyfully embraced his parents and sisters, when he hastened with Horace to the

cottage of Mrs. Hamilton. The delighted Constance, blushed at the ardor with which he caught her in his embrace, even before he would permit her to welcome her brother, and her eyes sunk under the sparkling animation with which his were fixed on her. Infinite was the pleasure she experienced, but it was not such as could be increased by reflection, and when she had leisure to recollect the emotion with which she had received Aretas, she could not conceal from herself that it was different from that which had affected her at sight of her brother, and her heart reproached her for it, for as a *brother* she ever had and still wished to consider Aretas. She had been accustomed to fancy him a child in comparison to herself, for at an early age, two

years seemed to give her a much more important seniority than it now did, when both were equally mature in every mental charm.

Mrs. Hamilton fully aware of the consequences an intimacy with so fine a young man as Aretas was likely to produce in regard to her daughter, whose heart had hitherto remained untouched, would have cautioned her to keep strict guard over it, had she not apprehended that her suggesting the probability of her yielding it to young Mansfield, might be the means of putting it in her head. She thought it therefore more prudent to appear to consider it as a matter entirely out of the question, and contented herself with frequently descanting on the abso-

lute necessity of a young woman keeping a vigilant watch over her affections, so as effectually to prevent their fixing themselves, where honour, prudence, or propriety forbade. Thus, Constance was prepared to detect the nature of her feelings, and was both alarmed and unhappy when she found that the beautiful affectionate *boy*, as she used to consider him, was the constant companion of her thoughts, and that the *increased* affection of his manner towards her, though it delighted her, yet brought an after pang to her heart, which had never followed it in their juvenile days.

She was invited to stay at the Abbey, where, indeed, she was accustomed to spend more than half her time; she had not

resolution to decline going, while she fancied she could find no pretext for excusing herself, and in the constant society of Aretas, her attachment daily gained strength. The brilliancy of his whole character, his inspiring vivacity, and genuine warmth of heart, was such as at once to captivate the imagination, and engage every feeling of the breast in his favour. Those who could have beheld him with indifference, must have had hearts cased in ice ! and those who were not animated by his conversation, must have been dead to the powers of sympathy, and invulnerable to the enlivening influence of original wit. Could it then be expected that a youthful female, educated in retirement, and a stranger to the world, would withstand, unmoved, so

powerful a combination, when united to an elegant person, and most prepossessing countenance.

A marked preference from such a Being, was so flattering, that one must have been more or less than mortal to have repelled it with reserve, or met his courteousness with frowns ! Constance could not have done so had her life been the forfeit of her failure, and Aretas felt perfectly happy in the confidence that he was beloved by her, on whose affection he built his future happiness. He, with his sisters, Horace and Constance, now formed an almost inseparable party, the young men invariably declining all society in which the ladies were not included, and while in their rambles,

Horace gave the arm to Miss Mansfield, Aretas would linger behind with Constance, and thus favoured by opportunity, the natural impetuosity of his disposition could not long be restrained, and his trembling auditor was at once shocked and delighted by hearing an undisguised avowal of his attachment to her.

She intreated him to be for ever silent on the subject, and with tearful eyes reminded him of the ungrateful light in which she must appear to his parents, could they be sensible, she even for a moment would listen to such a theme, and added, that he had banished her from his home ; for after the confession he had made she could not possibly continue there. Aretas, with a vehemence that ter-

rified her, declared that if she attempted to curtail her visit he would instantly avow his sentiments to his father, and aver as he now did, in the sight of Heaven, that he never would marry any one but her while she permitted him the slightest hope, nay while her hand remained at liberty ! but, if she would promise to indulge him with her society, and neither betray to her mother or any other person likely to oppose his wishes, the confession he had now made, he would endeavour by *degrees* to win sir Henry to his purpose, and avoid if possible the appearance of violently opposing his will.

Constance, in plaintive accents, implored him to think no more of so imprudent a project, nor encourage expec-

tations that must inevitably end in disappointment, and be equally productive of misery to them both. She exhorted him to obedience to the best of fathers, but he heard nothing but the indirect avowal that her happiness was involved with his, and by tender intreaties or violent expostulations, he prevailed on her to promise she would throw no impediments in the way of his designs by what he termed a too scrupulous idea of honour and propriety. Constance had too strong an advocate in his favour within her bosom, to permit her judgment to exert itself impartially ; but she was not so far blind to prudence, and deaf to reason, as not to feel sensible she was acting improperly. Her unhappiness hourly increased, which being observed by Aretas, his at-

tentions were redoubled, and after a severe struggle, Constance resolved on returning home as soon as she possibly could without exciting the astonishment of the family.

But a stimulus, as unpleasant as unexpected, was given to her intention by a sudden and obvious alteration in the behaviour of sir Henry and Lady Mansfield towards her. They had till now treated her as a favourite child, but the undisguised particularity of Aretas's attentions to her, could no longer be overlooked, even by those who had been accustomed to see them together on a footing of the strictest intimacy..

Sir Henry was no less displeased than

alarmed : he imparted his apprehensions to his lady, who he found entertained similar ones, and almost unconsciously their manner towards Constance, (whom they no longer could desire to retain as an inmate) underwent a sensible change.

Constance, in the present state of her feelings, was peculiarly alive to the smallest slight, and scarcely could she restrain the tears that gathered in her eyes on perceiving the cold looks of those whose features had ever been wont to wear an encouraging smile towards her. She was naturally of a timid disposition, and though at once resolved to go, she felt incapable of assuming courage to *say* so, lest she should be questioned as to the cause of her precipitate determination;

for she was sure she could not enter so far into the subject as to declare that she felt the behaviour of the master and mistress of the mansion, without betraying the strongest emotion. Her young friends and brother observed her extreme dejection, which she imputed to a trifling indisposition, and retired early to bed, where she passed the hours in deliberating how it would be most prudent to act in the present crisis.

CHAPTER XI.

THE situation of Constance, was such as to prevent her conducting herself with that independant loftiness, it would have been most gratifying to have displayed; though perhaps the mildness of her disposition would not have permitted it, had no other cause existed: but she felt most sensibly the obligation her family was under to sir Henry; and her brother's welfare and provision in life was de-

pendent on him ; and she knew not how far she could be justified in betraying any degree of resentment, or whether it might not be deemed the height of ingratitude to appear at all offended, and perhaps occasion a breach between the families. That Aretas's attention to her had produced this change in the aspect of his parents, she was perfectly convinced, and dreaded nothing so much as his violence, should he discover that she felt herself aggrieved. How to conduct herself under such circumstances perplexed her extremely to determine ; she at length resolved to return home before breakfast, and leave an explanatory note for lady Mansfield ; and as soon as it was daylight she rose to perform this unpleasant task.

After much consideration, she produced the following lines.

" Feeling but too sensibly, that I have been so very unfortunate as to incur your ladyship's and sir Henry's displeasure, and miserable under the apprehension of having offended those to whom my family and self owe so large a debt of gratitude, I dare not again risk the mortifying conviction that I am beheld with different eyes to those which once beamed approbation on me, nor venture to obtrude myself into your presence under the consciousness of being an intruder. I shall therefore return home before you receive this letter, not from any feeling of resentment, which would ill become one, who has till now been fostered by your un-

varied kindness, but from sorrow and regret that I have in some way, which I shall never cease to deplore, forfeited that regard, which conferred no less honour than happiness on your ladyship's most respectful and obliged,

CONSTANCE HAMILTON.

Five o'Clock, Tuesday Morning."

Constance felt more satisfied when she had written this letter, though she was heart-sick at the thoughts of leaving a mansion, which had been the scene of her happiest hours; which she at this moment believed would never return; nay that she might be for ever exiled from the beloved abode she was now quitting. Not the least unpleasant part of the business was the necessity for accounting to

her mother, for her precipitate and unexpected return home, as her visit was to have extended some days longer. To acknowlege the truth (at least as far as related to the alteration in sir Henry and his lady's manner towards her,) was her only alternative, for no temptation would have induced her to have had recourse to an artifice, even had a convenient one suggested itself.

On the subject of Aretas's sentiments in regard to herself, she resolved to be silent, and that the real motive of his parent's coldness should never be suspected by any thing that fell from her. But how little was she aware of her utter incapacity of concealing her emotions, or their source, from the penetrating, and

perhaps suspicious eye of a mother, whose affection for her, caused her, with ogle gaze to scan the whole nature of her feelings.

Mrs. Hamilton was surprised and alarmed at the unexpected appearance of her daughter, just as she was sitting down to breakfast; her looks denoted agitation and distress, and convinced her mother that some unpleasant cause had occasioned her to seek her home. The maternal welcome, pronounced in the voice of tender solicitude, instantly drew the quick gathering tears from the eyes of Constance, and pale and trembling, she sunk on her mother's bosom, and in broken accents imparted to her the occasion of her return, by particularizing

the trifling instances, which (though slight in themselves,) too plainly evinced an alteration in the disposition of her friends towards her, and that her presence was no longer agreeable to them; she concluded her relation by recapitulating the contents of the letter she had left for lady Mansfield.

Her mother closely questioned her concerning any probable cause of offence she might unintentionally have been guilty of towards persons, whom Mrs. Hamilton had long since experienced were by no means capricious, and who she was convinced must have had some strong reasons for acting as they had done; the *real* cause she shrewdly suspected.

Constance was voluble in her protestations of ever having conducted herself with the utmost respect and veneration, in regard to every member of the family; but when her mother (purposely to try the effect it would have on her) observed, that perhaps even the *accustomed* familiarity of young Mansfield, who she ought to recollect was not now a *child*, might be disagreeable to his parents.

Constance was struck dumb! her cheeks glowed, and her whole aspect betrayed extreme confusion. The mystery was unravelled, and by her daughter's increased embarrassment, on the subject being farther pursued, Mrs. Hamilton scarcely doubted that Aretas had made some declaration of a passion for her, to

which she was by no means insensible. Shocked and distressed at this idea, and still more at the apprehension that her child's peace might be wounded, she affectionately importuned her to repose the whole nature and source of her unhappiness in her maternal breast. But Constance remembered her promise to Aretas, and would at this moment have given worlds to have recalled it: she remained silent, but her tears redoubled, and when her mother expressed an anxious hope that no *particular* attention on young Mansfield's part had been the means of displeasing his parents, still Constance spoke not, nor were words required to confirm Mrs. Hamilton's suspicions. She farther said, she hoped Mr. Mansfield had not been so extremely im-

prudent and reprehensible as to profess a stronger degree of partiality than friendship could justify ! Constance was still silent. " My dear child," continued her mother, " I see through this whole affair, and nothing could have distressed me more than that any thing of this kind should have occurred ; I conceived your seniority of years, as well as situation in life, would have prevented Aretas ever thinking of you in any other light than that of a sister. I am extremely angry with him. This boyish prepossession, (which no doubt he would have felt for any tolerably agreeable girl he might have happened to meet) may be the occasion of much unhappiness to us all ! Not that I for a moment conceive it pos-

sible your heart can be affected, as you must of course consider him as a mere boy ; but the harmony that has hitherto existed between the families, may be interrupted, through his childish folly, and our welfare and happiness be equally affected. Compose yourself, my child ; while you are sensible that there has been nothing to blame in your own conduct, such violent emotion is unreasonable, and inconsistent with that firmness of character I *hope* you possess."

This address did not tend to diminish Constance's disorder.

"Constance," said her mother, "I desire your implicit confidence ! Consider

how delicate is our situation ! and to determine how to act with propriety, I must be fully acquainted with such particulars as you have it in your power to communicate."

As her mother had penetrated into the secret she had promised Aretas to retain, Constance felt herself absolved from longer continuing silent, particularly when urged by such important considerations to declare all that had passed. Her full heart felt bursting to unburthen itself, for peace had deserted it from the moment it had been the deposit of a secret, she was forbidden to impart to her mother ; and she now recapitulated to her the substance of the conversation in

which Aretas had declared his passion for her. This, she did with such perturbation and embarrassment as to convince her mother, she but too sensibly participated in the feelings of the being so every way calculated to inspire a reciprocal attachment; and however Mrs. Hamilton affected to believe this quite out of the question, she in her heart, thought it very natural, but wished not to increase the tenderness of her daughter's sensations, by appearing to understand them, but rather on the contrary, endeavoured to make her ashamed of them, which she thought would be the most effectual method of enabling her to overcome them. Perceiving that she was at this moment incapable of controuling

her emotion, and unable to taste what she had placed before her, she affectionately embraced her, and bade her retire to her chamber, and endeavour to compose herself.

CHAPTER XII.

WITH the deepest concern, Mrs. Hamilton reflected on this unfortunate affair, in which she perceived the peace and honour of her family equally involved ! Very little consideration sufficed to convince her she must immediately leave her tranquil home, and remove from the vicinity of the Abbey, nay retain her future residence a secret from its inhabitants, as the only effectual means of proving to

them the sincerity of her desire to prevent all communication between her daughter and Aretas, for after what Constance had related, she scarcely doubted young Mansfield would with all that candour and vehemence which characterised him, confess the whole nature of his sentiments to his parents, throwing himself entirely on their indulgence. It was therefore requisite she should act with promptness, and she resolved to set out the very next morning, with her daughter for London, and taking a lodging in a retired part of the town, remain there till Aretas had again left home, or some change had occurred which might permit her to return without danger of interrupting the domestic tranquillity of her valuable friends.

Though averse to a residence in the metropolis, even for a short time, she determined to repair there, from the certainty that she could be more completely secluded in that vast capital, than any where in the country, where strangers are always known to be such, and excite curiosity ; and should Aretas form the design of tracing them, having reached town, he would there be foiled in his pursuit, as it would be next to impossible he should succeed in discovering their place of abode.

She expected she should hear from the Abbey in the course of the day, as she thought it most probable some notice would be taken of Constance's departure, or she should see her son ; at all events,

she intended writing to Lady Mansfield, in order that *she* might not be at a loss to understand the motives of her conduct. The most unreserved confidence existed between them, and she felt that she could address her at large on the nature of their mutual feelings. With a heavy heart, rendered still more dejected by the consciousness of her child's unhappiness, and of how painful to her would be the banishment to the uncongenial region they were about to visit, Mrs. Hamilton commenced the preparations for her journey, having previously apprized Constance of her intention. *Her* gentle nature almost sunk under this painful conflict, and the thoughts of being exiled from her beloved home, from the companions of her youth, and above all from

him who had first excited the liveliest affections of her heart, and whom she was forbidden to love, was accompanied with such acute anguish that she found it impossible to maintain a semblance of composure, even in presence of her mother, who forbore to augment her disorder by appearing to notice it.

The day wore away, and they heard nothing from the Abbey, neither did Horace repair to the cottage.

In the evening Mrs. Hamilton addressed a letter to her son, hinting to him the occasion of her precipitate journey, which she intended commencing at six o'clock next morning. She particularly cautioned him against taking any part whatever in

this affair, but to endeavour to conciliate sir Henry, nor offend his patron, by tenaciously resenting any *fancied* slight; but to take every opportunity of convincing him, that so far from approving Aretas's partiality for his sister, it gave him the strongest uneasiness, and that he would do all in his power to convince him of its absurdity.

That as she doubted not Aretas would question him respecting the place of residence she had selected, she would enable him to deny all knowledge of it by concealing it even from him. He was to direct his letters to her bookseller's in town, from whence she should find means of obtaining them. The cottage would be open to him, when his visit at the

Abbey had terminated, as she should leave a trusty servant to take care of the house, and *there* he might remain till the end of the vacation, as, unless his friends were as kind as ever to him, and sincerely solicitous for his company, she would by no means have him continue with them.

All this, and a great deal more Mrs. Hamilton addressed to her son ; to Lady Mansfield she wrote as follows :—

“ My dear friend,

“ I confidently expected to have heard from you in the course of this day. I hope no member of my family has been the unfortunate cause of disturbing your domestic tranquillity. What a return for the infinite obligation I owe you ! The

sincerity of my grief, should *that* be the case, I am sure *you* will not doubt. Should Aretas, with boyish petulance, have avowed to his father, as he has already betrayed to the object of this childish prepossession, the foolish fancy that at present occupies his imagination, and which doubtless will be as transient as it is vivid, he must certainly, and most justly have incurred Sir Henry's severest displeasure.

" Some blame may be supposed to attach to her who has been the unhappy cause of this disturbance ! Whether she has been surprised into any unguarded encouragement of this folly, I cannot pretend to say, as she has not always been beneath my eye, but I should think *not*, as I

have endeavoured to inculcate into her mind the most scrupulous ideas of prudence and propriety. But I will speak of her with the same impartiality I would of one in whom I had not so dear an interest; your son is fascinating, and no longer appears like a boy! she has been used to dwell on his perfections, and never beheld any one who could compare with him! She is at that age when the heart seeks an object to engage it, and it is most natural to conclude her inclination leans towards him.

“ I shall therefore for the sake of her peace, my own honor, and above all, the happiness of your son; in which is in-

volved that of his whole family, remove her from the vicinity of an object that might be found too attractive.

" Before you receive this we shall be far advanced on our journey. Our destination I shall retain a secret even from you my best and dearest friend ! any letters directed to me at my bookseller's will reach me, but even by enquiring you will not be able to trace my abode; my motive for concealment is my dread of your son's forming the rash project of pursuing us, and never again will I admit him into my daughter's presence, till time, or circumstances, shall have reduced the warmth of his present feelings towards her to the temperament of brotherly regard. I will not pain you by attempting to paint my

sensations on leaving the peaceful residence where I have known such tranquil happiness, and where, in the bosom of friendship, I had forgotten the former stings of adversity, or only remembered them more justly to appreciate the present comfort.

“ God bless you, and for ever prosper you and your beloved family, and above all preserve me, or mine, from being the ungrateful cause of disturbing your peace !

“ Ever affectionately yours,

“ E. HAMILTON.”

Before the family at the Abbey was stirring the ensuing morning, Mrs. Hamilton and the unhappy Constance, whose

ea rs flowed incessantly, while deep sighs echoed by her sympathizing parent, burst from her swelling heart, had proceeded many miles on their journey, which we will leave them to pursue, while we retrace what had passed at the Abbey, from the time Constance had quitted it.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE observations sir Henry had made on his son's conduct, excited his anger in no small degree, and he resolved to speak to him at once on the subject. He had serious views for his matrimonial establishment, in a line every way desirable, but had (owing to Aretas's youth) forbore to acquaint him with the connection he had in speculation for him, as he did not wish him to marry before he was of age, and

he had hoped to have contrived it so, that he should have fallen from inclination into his plan. But he determined not to permit him to mislead himself, or encourage hopes founded no doubt on the indulgence he had ever met with from his parents.

Lady Mansfield was no stranger to her husband's intentions, and though extremely partial to Constance, as the daughter of her friend, and also from the many amiable qualities apparent in her young favourite, still she was not *every* thing she wished for in the wife of her son ! She had neither title or connections, and was by no means a suitable alliance for him ; and insensibly, Lady Mansfield's manner assumed a coldness towards her,

as she conceived it possible she might interfere with their ambitious schemes.

But how did her ladyship regret this on the perusal of Constance's letter, and how did she reproach herself with having grieved her gentle spirit, and driven her afflicted and humiliated from her house ! She had no idea that so great a change had been apparent in her behaviour; she had not supposed Constance would have perceived *any*.

Lady Mansfield had a most tender heart, and was quite shocked at the thoughts of Constance's unhappiness, and still more at the mortification and distress her mother would experience.

She was on the point of ordering her carriage and setting off for the cottage with the intention of bringing Constance back to the Abbey, but the sudden recollection that she might be engendering false hopes checked her, and shewing the letter to sir Henry, she applied to him for his advice on the subject.

He declared it was impossible to determine how to act in respect to Constance, till after his interview with Aretas, for if he found that he had really any serious attachment to her, and was averse to the connection he should propose to him, he would immediately send him from home, and let him spend the vacation in travelling, nor on any account permit him to revisit the neighbourhood, till he had got

the better of his passion. During his absence, the friendship between the two families would continue uninterrupted, and lady Mansfield might then have Constance with her as much as she pleased.

At breakfast all the young people were inquiring for Constance, the girls had sought her in her chamber, and were astonished to find it vacated. Lady Mansfield satisfied them in some measure by saying—"She is gone to breakfast with her mother, we must go and fetch her by and by, if she does not return."

"If she does not return!" echoed Aretas, in a tone of alarm, and with an interrogating glance; and starting up he added—"I'll go directly and—"

A look from his father, such as he had never before met, as with authoritative gesture he motioned him to replace himself, caused Aretas to sit down with glowing cheeks, and a most unpleasant sensation.

Horace too felt extremely uncomfortable : it was plain something was *wrong*, and also that it concerned his sister ; he and his friend remained totally silent during the meal.

As soon as it was over, sir Henry requested Aretas would attend him to his study, which he did, feeling very like a culprit about to be arraigned for some high misdemeanor. Horace would have hastened home, not to *remain* there, but

merely to ascertain what was to be learned from that quarter, but sir Henry, as he quitted the room, bade him take the ladies to walk: this he did purposely to convince Horace he was not offended with him.

His sisters scarcely doubted what would be the subject of Aretas's *tête-a-tête* with their father, for they had long since discovered his attachment to Constance, having so often seen them together in the absence of their parents. They loved Constance tenderly, and would have been delighted to have called her sister, but they now dreaded an impending storm, which would for ever destroy the probability of so pleasing a tie between them.

The features of Aretas, as he followed his father, bore stronger evidence of the lowering tempest than did those of the parent, who seated himself with steady and composed air ; while Aretas in obvious agitation seized a chair, and threw himself into it, with a vain attempt at appearing perfectly calm ; while the continual changing of his position, as he alternately sat erect, or reclined from side to side, and rubbed his hands in each other, with the restlessness of expectant anxiety, plainly denoted the state of his mind.

His father began thus,—“ It seems no less strange than disagreeable to me, Aretas, to address you in a tone of reprebension ! You have rarely merited it,

and perhaps still seldom met with it ! but your late conduct demands that I should express my strong disapprobation of it. I cannot admit the supposition that you entertain other than a *fraternal* regard for Constance, convinced as you must be, that fate has placed an insurmountable bar between you.

" Now, since you have been at home this time, I have observed with pain and amazement, that your attentions to her have assumed an absurd particularity, highly blameable and calculated to mislead and deceive her into an idea, that you really entertain a serious passion for her ! If you had indeed that affection, that *brotherly* affection, which I wish you to have for her, and which you ought to

feel ; *her* peace would be your first consideration, and the apprehension that it might be affected, would render you scrupulously cautious of exciting hopes which you *must* disappoint ! for the being who I wish to engage your heart, I will now tell you is already known to me ! and is such as no one could call me unreasonable for requesting you to love ! nay such as I believe you could not resist loving, were you but once to behold her !”

Aretas had made several attempts to speak, but sir Henry would not permit him to interrupt him, but at this moment he vehemently exclaimed—“O do not talk thus ! there is but one being in existence I ever can love, as a wife ! from childhood

our souls have been united, and death alone can part them ! If you forbid me to love her, at least do not command me to love another ! ”

Sir Henry frowned as he said—“ What romantic folly is this ! I had a better opinion of your understanding than to suppose you could have yielded to such weakness ! You have chosen wilfully to deceive yourself, for you knew I never would consent to your forming such a connection. You ! who are to perpetuate the honors of my house ! No, never shall you contract an alliance unworthy of you, unless you are resolved to fly in the face of paternal authority, and forfeit my affection for ever.”

“ God forbid !” ejaculated Aretas, fervently;

Sir Henry was growing warm, but this exclamation from his son had an instantaneous effect on him, and he continued in a softened tone—

“ I believe you would not disobey me ! Your happiness has been my first consideration, and as far as human foresight can penetrate, it would be secured by the union I have in view for you. Worth, beauty, connections, fortune, accomplishments, are all combined in the object whose affections I wish you to seek, and which I doubt not you will succeed in obtaining. Her father is already pre-

possessed in your favour, and as eager for the alliance as I am myself; we have been friends from our youth, and last winter we met in town, and communicated to each other our mutual wish of cementing our friendship by the union of our children, a connection no less advantageous to both parties, than agreeable. The only child of Lord Shurgrove, just eighteen, you are to consider as your future wife."

"O name her not!" cried Aretas, clasping his hands passionately together, "Do not force me to appear disobedient! O, my father! my affections are not at my own disposal, they are for ever fixed on the most amiable, the most deserving of

human beings ! and never, never, can I love another."

" Do not exasperate me boy !" cried his father, his brow contracting, " nor imagine you can presume on my foolish indulgence of you ! already do I feel the bad effects of it in your present perverseness. I thought you had more just ideas of what is incumbent on you, in the situation you stand in, and still more in that you are destined to fill. Did a mutual attachment exist between Horace and one of your sisters, it would not give me a moment's uneasiness ; he is a worthy youth, and it shall be my business to promote his welfare ; for my *daughters* I am not ambitious, they are not placed in responsible situations. But the dignity

of the family is dependent on you, and it *shall not* be degraded ! I do not ask you instantly to transfer your affections to the object I have selected for you —I do not wish you to marry till you are of age, but I demand as you value my regard, that you do all in your power to get the better of this boyish fancy, and I entertain not a doubt that you will succeed.

“ I forbid you the presence of Constance, till you can behold her merely as a friend, and as I wish to avoid all dissension between the families, and any interruption to our friendly intercourse; I intend that you shall spend the vacation in travelling.

" You shall set off to-morrow. Your tutor, Mr. Hatfield, will be your companion, and you may make the tour of Scotland, and unless you are resolved to incur my heaviest displeasure, you will not attempt to obtain an interview with Constance—"

" O, sir ! Such severity from you."

Sir Henry would not hear him, and proceeded—" when you are gone, your mother shall reconduct Constance to the Abbey, and she shall be received with the same kindness and affection, that has ever been shewn her, and on *you* alone it depends whether she ever be treated with harshness, for if I find that you take a single step towards maintaining any inter-

course with her, from that moment the intimacy between the families shall be dissolved, and the friendship of years will be the sacrifice of your folly and disobedience.”

“ Oh ! my father ! hear me, I conjure you ! only listen to me, and let me plead my own cause !”

“ Silence Sir ! I will neither listen to you, look at you, nor have any communication with you, while you act in opposition to my will. Go, and let me never again have occasion to speak to you on this subject !”—

The authoritative tone sir Henry assumed, was not to be disputed, and Aretas

retired with a burning face, and swelling heart. Unused to opposition, or even the slightest murmur of disapprobation, he could ill brook this severe censure, conveyed too, with such apparent indignation, for sir Henry had feigned a stronger degree of resentment, than he really felt, being afraid to trust his own stability. Ever accustomed to yield to the solicitations of his darling son, he had refused to listen to him, from the apprehension that he should be unable to hear him unmoved, and he sent him precipitately from his presence feeling too much inclined to compassionate the misery, so apparent in his speaking countenance.

He remained in his study in the most uneasy state of mind, vainly endeavour-

ing to turn his thoughts from the subject of his unhappiness: at length he sent for Mr. Hatfield, (who continued to reside in the family) in order to consult him respecting the journey he wished him to undertake, and which he knew would be perfectly agreeable to him, as he had often heard him express a desire to make the tour of Scotland.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARETAS, after remaining a short time a prey to the most distracting feelings, determined to seek his mother, and endeavour to prevail on her, to become his advocate. He found her decidedly on Sir Henry's side, but she could not listen to his pathetic pleadings unmoved ; she soon began to waver, and the conference ended in her promising to exert all her influence to induce Sir Henry to relent.

Aretas derived some consolation from this assurance, but his anxiety to convince Constance of his unalterable attachment was if possible increased, when by his importunities he obtained a sight of her letter to his mother, and he employed his imagination in vainly seeking some alternative between disobeying his father, or permitting Constance to continue ignorant of what had passed, and of his resolution never to give her up.

Sir Henry contrived to prevent Horace going to the cottage on that day, as he did not wish him to repair there in the present posture of affairs, fearing that his mother (feeling some degree of resentment) might perhaps detain him, but addressing him with more than ordinary

kindness, he told him that lady Mansfield would be going to the cottage in the morning, and he might accompany her and bring Constance back.

Aretas was inaccessible, even to his friend or sisters on this day, and on hearing that he was immediately to set off for Scotland, they doubted not he had incurred his father's displeasure, and it added to their uneasiness at the thoughts of the approaching separation.

For once lady Mansfield's eloquence failed of effect, and neither her entreaties or expostulations could induce sir Henry to countenance his son's wishes; and the youth had the mortification to learn from his mother the ill success of her exertions.

in his behalf. He was now nearly reduced to despair, yet his father had consented to grant him a parting interview the next morning, and now all his hopes rested on the sanguine expectation that the parent might be overcome at the moment of separation, when he resolved to make a most vigorous attack on his feelings and affections, over which he had once believed he possessed unbounded influence.

He joined the family at breakfast, but the glowing tint natural to his complexion was faded ; a sleepless night, and the agitation of mind he had undergone, had robbed his cheeks of their ruddy hue, and his eyes were languid and sunken. Neither sir Henry or lady Mansfield were present, they took their breakfast in her

ladyship's *boudoir*, which was rather unusual. Horace was extremely dejected, for he had received his mother's letter and was much distressed at its contents: every one was silent and abstracted, and the meal was not concluded, when a message was delivered from Sir Henry to request Aretas would come to him.

With a palpitating heart he obeyed the summons, and a deeper tinge for a moment overspread his countenance as he entered his father's presence. He instantly perceived that his mother was in tears, and sir Henry's looks evinced considerable disorder, an open letter lay on the table.

Sir Henry motioned his son to seat himself as he said, "I am happy to tell you,

that if you feel any extraordinary repugnance to this journey, you may now remain at home, as I find by a letter from Mrs. Hamilton that she has, with a promptness and resolution which does her the highest honor, removed with her daughter from the neighbourhood, and will continue absent——.”

“Removed from the neighbourhood,” interrupted Aretas, “and have I been the wretched cause of banishing them from their home, and from the society of their friends? O, I will go instantly, I will fly to any quarter of the globe, and remain there for ever if you choose! only, let them be pursued! they cannot be gone

far, and induce them by every possible persuasion to return to their home!"

Sir Henry was evidently affected by the extreme agitation of his son, and lady Mansfield seized the moment to represent to him, in forcible language, the uncommon merit of Mrs. Hamilton, in having acted with such scrupulous propriety on the present occasion, as well as the superior prudence of her daughter in having confessed to her mother (as it was obvious she must have done) the nature of the attachment, it was equally plain Aretas had been so rash as to declare to her.

"O my husband," she continued, "how could an alliance with *such* people be esteemed degrading? Could they trace their

genealogy back to the deluge, and fill volumes with the titles of their progenitors, would it add another virtue to the many that already adorn their hearts? Where will you find an object so calculated to ensure our child's happiness as the amiable interesting Constance?—my heart ~~fe-~~ proaches me for my conduct towards her; I increased her unhappiness by my chilling aspect! O! we have all treated her most cruelly!—her affections have been sought only to be abused, and by forbidding Aretas to return them, his honor is involved."

" Undoubtedly it is!" cried the youth, and here expatiated in the most impassioned terms on the strength of his attachment, which had induced him to seek by

every means in his power to excite a reciprocal sentiment. "I will not disobey you, sir," he continued, "but to support life under the stigma of having acted so unworthily, would be to endure the greatest misery that could be inflicted on me. I once thought myself blessed in your affection, but—."

The tears sprung to his eyes, he hastily brushed them away, but the tenderness of his emotion was contagious. Sir Henry found himself assailed by the most eloquent and powerful influence of the two beings dearest to him in existence ; he was strongly impressed with the generosity of Mrs. Hamilton's behaviour, he had an affection for Constance, though he could not reconcile himself to the idea of receiving

her as a daughter-in-law, and he felt incapable of adhering to his former resolution, for he was a man of strong feelings, and was unable to listen unmoved to the solicitations of those he loved, on a subject which so nearly concerned their happiness.

At length he so far conceded as to declare that *if*, after two years absence (which he intended should be spent in travelling, and visiting such foreign countries as the state of public affairs would permit) Aretas still continued attached to Constance, he would no longer oppose his wishes; but that in the mean time he would not permit any kind of intercourse between them, either by letter or through any third person, farther than

by the correspondence with his own family, they might hear of each other's health and safety.

Aretas was overjoyed at this concession, it was as great as his most sanguine hopes had led him to expect; the thoughts of inconstancy on either side never even occurred to his mind, and he felt as certain of being ultimately united to Constance, as if the nuptial day had been already fixed, and every impediment to his happiness surmounted. He poured forth his gratitude to his father in the liveliest manner, and now only entreated that steps might be taken to recall Mrs. Hamilton to her home, and that what had now passed might be imparted to her, and he would commence his journey the moment sir Henry commanded.

Lady Mansfield suggested that as Mrs. Hamilton had only set off early that morning, she might certainly be overtaken, as no difficulty would be found in tracing the way she had gone; but that any *verbal* message would induce her to return, she could not for a moment imagine; and even a letter from herself might fail of its effect, and nothing but a written explanation of what he had determined on from sir Henry, was likely to succeed. This too, was obvious to the baronet, he thought he owed to Mrs. Hamilton to be entirely unreserved; he therefore sat down to address her, intending to dispatch the letter by a steady man servant on horse back.

But Aretas observed, that the man might be easily puzzled in attempting to

trace the travellers, and any delay on the road would render it impossible to overtake them ; or even should he succeed in coming up with them, Mrs. Hamilton might feel hurt, that the task of pursuing her had been assigned to a servant, she might rather wonder that her son, or even he (Aretas) had not undertaken the pursuit ; in short, after much importunity and argument, both from mother and son, sir Henry consented that Aretas's journey should be deferred *one* day, and that he should accompany Horace in following his mother, on conditions, that he would not attempt (should the opportunity occur) to enter into any engagement with Constance, by vows or protestations, which might be considered as binding as the most solemn contract ; but to re-

member that till the expiration of two years he was to conduct himself as her *friend* only.

Having obtained his promise to this effect, sir Henry felt convinced he would not abuse his confidence, nor after his extraordinary indulgence, (of which Aretas appeared fully sensible), act in any respect in opposition to his will.

CHAPTER XV.

WITH a heart bounding with delight, Aretas flew to give orders for the fleetest horses in the stables to be prepared, and then sought his friend Horace, and hastily informed him that they were both *instantly* to proceed in pursuit of his mother and sister. He promised to explain every thing to him on their way, and Horace drew the most favourable conclusions

from his friend's aspect, as well as from the purport of his words.

They were to be attended by a groom, through whom the chief difficulty at the *onset* was at once done away, as on hearing of the object of their journey, he informed them, that having been out early in the morning he had encountered a chaise, and learnt from the driver that it was going to the cottage to conduct the ladies to S—. That was the first stage on the road to London, which the young men now doubted not was the final destination of the travellers, and they felt confident of overtaking them, if not during the day, most certainly at the town where they must stop for the night.

Elate with the most pleasurable sensations, the friends set out on this agreeable chace, and Horace was made no less happy than Aretas, when in the course of his communication of what had passed between himself and sir Henry, the latter repeated what his father had said in regard to the light in which he should contemplate an attachment between Horace and one of his daughters. This Aretas purposely told his friend, from a suspicion that he was not indifferent to his eldest sister, and nothing could have made him happier than a double union of the families. Horace colouring highly, asked him how he could for a moment imagine him so presumptuous.

Tbough resolved in his own mind to

exert his utmost endeavours to excite a mutual attachment in the breast of Miss Mansfield, of whose sentiments in regard to himself, he could form no decided opinion ; and until he had ascertained that point, he determined to keep his own secret. Though he listened to his friends recital of his passion for Constance with strong interest, he yet dissuaded him from thinking of it, and advised him not to disappoint sir Henry's hopes, but promote as far as was in his power the aggrandizement of his family.

Aretas was quite angry with him for attempting to recommend such a line of conduct, and declared it betrayed a want of affection both for his sister and his friend, but Horace soon appeased his

temporary ire, and they entered S—— in high glee, having traced their friends through each turnpike; and they were still further satisfied on finding that they had been driven to the same inn which they themselves repaired to.

The chaise that had conducted them was just setting out on its return. Aretas immediately accosted the driver. The man, who knew him perfectly well, uncovered his head precipitately, and hat in hand, replied, “Please your honour, sir, it is about two hours as near as I can tell since the heavy coach came in, and I fancy, sir, if I may be so bold, that the ladies came to meet it sir, for they went in it sir, and they took their places, as I

heard the bookkeeper say, all the way to *Lunnun* sir."

" And does the coach stop on the road?" " Yes, sir, if you please, they *stops* to *dinner*, twenty minutes, or half an hour *mayhap*."

" And at night, to sleep of course?"

" O Lord no sir, they *travels* all night."

" All night ! Good heavens how shocking!" exclaimed Aretas, and turning to Horace, who stood beside him, anxiously listening to the post boy's communication, he continued, " What could have induced your mother to fix on such a mode of travelling?" Horace sighed, but replied

not as he *thought* “ The same cause that compels so many others to expose themselves to fatigue, discomfort, and the still greater annoyance of vulgarity and presumption ; — poverty, cold, relentless, heart chilling poverty ! that cramps every generous inclination ; restrains the noblest feelings of our nature, and levels the children of refinement with the uneducated boor, and forces them to mingle with beings as uncongenial to them as the scenes in which they encounter.”

“ And does the coach reach London to-morrow morning ? ” asked Aretas.

“ No, not to-morrow please your honour, they be two nights out sir, and gets to the Swan with Two Necks, Lad

Lane, at six o'clock the day after to-morrow morning sir."

" O dreadful! and was this horrible conveyance very full?"

" Aye, please you sir, *chock* full as they could cram; six inside, ten outside, besides coachy, and two children to boot; guard made just a dozen *a top*."

" Horrible! how could any body in their senses think of entering such a machine? Come, come Horace, let us hasten after them, it is impossible they could proceed fast with such a load."

A demur now arose respecting the best mode of prosecuting this pursuit: the

rapidity with which they had proceeded on the horses that had brought them thus far, they considered as quite a sufficient day's work for them, and neither their humanity, or apprehension of sir Henry's displeasure, (should they misuse them,) would permit them to press them further. The question now was, whether they should proceed on hack horses, or in a chaise and four; but on inquiry they found they could only be accommodated with a *pair* of horses, which they might either have in a chaise, or mount with saddles, as they were the only ones of any description that could be procured.

"Surely," cried Aretas, "they will get on faster with us on their backs than

with a chaise lumbering after them, so come let us mount forthwith."

"Won't ye please to have them saddled first?" said the hostler, (they were now standing in the stable yard,) "Of course, of course," cried Mansfield, "Run, make haste and get them on, have you no helper?" He followed the man into the stable, and eagerly [seizing a saddle that was hanging up, threw it across one of the horses as he said, "Come, make haste, get the other ready," and Horace who was impatiently standing by inquired for another saddle.

"Dang it, if I know where t'other saddle *be*," said the hostler, "Unless he's up in loft, but I'll go and seek *un*."

"O pray make haste, my good fellow, you will find it worth your while!" cried Aretas as with a violent jerk he tightened the girths, which being old and rotten, instantly cracked, and Aretas staggered back, execrating his own awkwardness and that hurry of impatience which defeated its own purpose.

What was now to be done? his own groom had taken their horses to another public house at some distance, where there was better accommodation for them, otherwise they might have made use of their own saddles. Aretas now called to the hostler, who was making a great noise in the loft above, (throwing about chains and straps in his search after the other saddle,) and informed him of what had

happened. He soon descended, saying, “Dang it, if I can find un, but perhaps he’s in fowl house, I’ll go and look.”—“Well but see here, I have broke the girth.” “Why you don’t say so! but can’t you tie *un* together?” In this Horace succeeded, while Aretas’s impatience almost tempted him to pull the girth out of his friend’s hand.

The hostler now brought in something, which he called a saddle, and though from its shape it could not possibly have formed a perch for the chickens, it bore evident marks of having either served them as a carpet, or been the favourite resort of a hen and her whole brood.

At sight of it Aretas exclaimed, “Take

it away, take it away ! Heaven and earth ! who do you imagine could mount that ? Fly, run as fast as you can lay legs to the ground, to the place where our horses are put up, and bring back one of the saddles."

" Lord help your honour, it is better than half a mile to the Sun, and it's never no use to get them there jemmy saddles for these here broad backs ; Lord love you, they'd pinch *un* all to pieces ! master would never let them run with *un* I am sure ! Bless ye, this *un* a very good saddle when he's wiped a bit."

He now, by the aid of a wisp of straw set about cleansing it of its impurities, in which he at length succeeded, and

the other horse was *caparisoned*; when a slight dispute arose between the friends, each insisting on mounting the most unseemly steed, but the contest was soon decided by Mansfield springing on that which appeared the worst, and which bore the unfortunate saddle that had been the means of delaying them so long.

No sooner were they out of town than they endeavoured to put their horses into a gallop, and Horace attained one point nearer this object than his friend, for he contrived to get his *charger* into an amble nearly approaching a canter, while neither the whip, the spur, nor the unqualified abuse Aretas bestowed on his inflexible palfrey, could stimulate him to relinquish the regular trot of the post horse,

while every stone in his way might have been reckoned, by his invariably tripping over it.

Aretas was in a perfect fever of impatience, excited by the variety of trifling causes that combined to delay them, and he exclaimed in a tone of despair; “We never *can* overtake them! I cannot get this brute on! you seem more fortunate, do make the best of your way forward, and secure some sort of conveyance, or better hacks to take us on, and by that time I shall probably have come up with you, if this beast does not break my neck.”

Horace put spurs to his horse, which now eagerly pressed forward, and Aretas

observed him suddenly turn out of the high road down a narrow lane. He called to Horace, telling him he was going wrong. "I know it," returned Horace, as he exerted his utmost strength and skill to turn the animal,—"I know it, but my horse *chooses* to go this way, and I can't turn him from his purpose." The creature actually carried him into a farm yard, the gate of which was standing open, and made directly towards a stable, but came to a full stop at some stone steps that were near it. Horace felt more ridiculous than can be conceived, when a plough-boy standing by came up to him, saying "*Measter's* down at fold, but he'll be back presently if you *ha* any business with him."

"I have no business with him," replied Horace, who could not forbear laughing at the absurdity of his situation, "but I fancy my *horse* has, for he chose to come here whether I would or not."

"Lord love ye," cried the plough-boy with a broad grin, "that be queer;" then looking at the horse, he added, "Dang it if he *bant* Whitefoot, that *measter* sold to Red Lion last week! aye sure enough he thought he was *a* bringing mistress home from market—*sure-ly* he knows the place ay well as *thof* he was a christian all one as us."

No coercive measure could induce Whitefoot to turn his back on his old home, but his friend the plough-boy

whistled him down the lane, and by some very eloquent words, (wholly unintelligible to Horace, but which Whitefoot seemed perfectly to comprehend,) he gave him to understand that he must proceed on the way. Horace was somewhat surprised that Aretas had not followed him, but on regaining the road he perceived him dismounted and carefully examining his horse's knees: his coat was covered with dust, and his hat appeared to have received a violent blow: "What is the matter?" cried Horace anxiously. "Why the beast tumbled completely down with me, and sent me over his head sprawling in the dust."

"But I hope you are not hurt!" said Horace, who only waited to be assured

of this before he indulged a hearty laugh, which he found irresistible. Nor could Aretas forbear joining in it, there was something so truly absurd in their mutual disasters ; and, though both were provoked, yet was their risibility excited in no small degree, for they were truly susceptible of the ridiculous. They had no alternative but attempting to proceed on their wretched jades. Aretas now remounted, in the full expectation of being again speedily sent flying before his steed, to resume his prostrations, like an Egyptian before the deified animal to whom he ascribes the power of a God.

Horace could no longer boast of the superiority of Whitefoot's speed to that of his companion, for the attraction

which had drawn him on with such celebrity towards the farm, was now left behind, and he was no longer eager to proceed. Indeed, had not that been the case, Horace would not now have left his friend, being in momentary dread of his meeting with some ugly accident in his precipitate descent to the attitude of Eastern adoration ; they therefore jogged on together, and side by side, in their accustomed trot, the poor animals got on slow but *sure*, which they ceased to be the moment they were compelled to make any unusual exertion. But to attempt overtaking a stage-coach which had two hours the advantage of them, at a pace in which they could not advance more than four miles and a half an hour, was so obviously ineffectual, that had they

not hoped to meet with some better means of accelerating their progress at the next town, they would have been tempted to relinquish the pursuit in despair.

They had proceeded for some time very steadily, Aretas in a state of the most painful irritation, occasioned by being thus compelled to restrain his impatience, and Horace very little better, when suddenly their horses made towards a house that stood by the road-side, and stopped right before it; "*Half-way House*," was written over the door, and the gentlemen were no longer in the dark as to the cause of this unexpected halt, as they doubted not that the horses were accustomed to water here. They did not attempt to force them on, for perceiving a returning

chaise at the door, they determined to proceed in it to the next town, the name of which they perceived written on it. The driver very readily agreed to take them, and they gladly relinquished their horses, and took possession of the chaise, and were conveyed, if not more rapidly, at least with greater safety on their way, where we will leave them for the present, in order to ascertain whether the commencement of Constance's journey had been equally inauspicious.

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. Hamilton (as has already appeared) resolved to prosecute her journey by a public conveyance, in which decision economy alone influenced her. She knew at what hour the coach passed through S——, and she regulated her progress to that place accordingly, and arrived there time enough to permit them to partake of a comfortable breakfast before the stage came in. Though Constance

had been a great traveller during her infancy, she had but a faint recollection of the last journey she had performed. Every thing was new to her, and had she not felt so extremely unhappy, might have proved amusing; but as it was, the cast of her mind tinctured every object she beheld, and spread around a dreary, solitary, and deserted prospect.

The rumbling of the huge machine which was to transport their bodies, but which had an exact contrary effect on their *minds* attracted her attention to the window, from whence she surveyed it with a species of terror. It was so loaded on the top as to give it the appearance of being in momentary danger of losing its equilibrium, and she really thought, that

the numerous population of the exterior, would have been scattered in every direction by the suddenness with which the horses stopped, after having proceeded with such velocity up the street as to endanger the lives of any inactive persons, or helpless child, who might unfortunately have been in the way.

Four grown persons, and two infants, descended from the interior of the vehicle. Each was loaded with some precious article they feared to trust out of their hands. One had a bundle, another a band-box, a third a basket, and a fourth a fiddle case, and Constance marvelled how all this could have been *stowed* within the small space that had contained it. How then was she amazed when they

were informed that there were two inside places *vacant*, and that therefore her mother and self might be accommodated. Mrs. Hamilton sighed, tho' she observed it was very fortunate.

Before the coach was ready to set off, she took her place in it next to Constance, whom she had recommended to seat herself in one corner, and who she thus secured from any unpleasant neighbour. The swarm on the outside now began to ascend, and, like an ardent enemy scaling a rampart, they were hanging on every projection, and struggling, with more activity than politeness, which should first reach the top, and secure what they conceived the best place. And now the packing of the inside commenced, and

the third place, next Mrs. Hamilton was *more* than *filled* up, for it was absolutely *jammed* up, by a huge matron whose precious blossom hung at the source from which it drew the springs of life, and which, in good truth, formed any thing but an *interesting* object; on her arm swung a bundle. The opposite seat was occupied by a smart looking girl, with the look, air, and manner, of a milliner's apprentice, and the bandbox on her knees seemed an emblem of her trade. Next her sat a man bearing the appearance of a respectable farmer, he was particularly solicitous respecting the welfare of a small basket, which he would not put out of his hands; it was carefully packed with straw and covered with brown paper. The sixth place was oc-

cupied by a musician, at least, such he might be inferred to be, from the fiddle case that rode between his feet. A little boy, about five years old, belonging to the before mentioned matron, stood wedged in between the projecting knees of the opposite parties, there being no possible place where he could seat himself.

The coachman having *popped* in his head to ascertain how many were within, and that they had all paid their fares, the door was shut. Constance gasped for breath, her opposite neighbour, the son of Apollo, respiration an odour, that rendered it sufficiently apparent that his earliest devotions had been paid to Bacchus instead of his tutelar deity, while the red

rim round his eyes, and their swimming *languor* made it a matter of doubt, whether the rosy God did not stand first in his estimation.

Constance leant her head out at the window, a curious scene was passing without. The book-keeper was protesting with much warmth that there was one more person on the outside than the coach was licensed to carry. Each in their turn vociferously declared they had taken and paid for their place, but an old woman by trade a huckster, and who had charge of two immense baskets full of poultry, remained silent on the occasion, and it was immediately discovered that she was the interloper. She was desired to descend, but was resolute in retaining her

situation, and a violent altercation ensued between her and the book-keeper, who threatened force if she persisted in retaining her place. She dared him to touch her, and swore most *manfully* that she was willing to pay for her place, and she wished she might be doomed to such a fate as we must not even name here, if she would stir an inch. The book-keeper caught hold of her cloaths and declared he would pull her down if she did not instantly descend; she continued obstinate, and having mounted half way up the coach he seized her by the arm, and she still resisting, they both together fell from their elevation into the kennel. Her baskets of poultry were thrown after her, and the coachman (having taken off his last glass) drove on without allowing

time for ascertaining whether the contending parties had received any injury.

Constance grasped her mother's arm with a sensation of terror as the ponderous machine proceeded with rapidity over the irregular pavement, producing such sudden concussions as were almost enough to dislocate the limbs of the unfortunate passengers, while one moment Constance found herself on her mother's lap, and the next nearly precipitated into the arms of the drunken fidler vis-a-vis.

While poor Constance, from the fragility of her frame, and peculiar lightness, was thus tossed about like a cockle shell on the turbulent waves of the ocean, the lusty matron, from her superior

weight, remained as steady as a Dutch-Dogger *water logged*, and suffered no inconvenience whatever from the violent undulations which rendered it so difficult for those in company with her to keep clear of each other. Once out of the town, the motion was less intolerable, and a conjunction of noses was no longer to be apprehended.

They had not been ten minutes in the coach, when the mother of the babes addressed the little boy, as she untied her bundle (which proved to be merely a *depot* of cakes, fruits, sugar-plumbs &c.) saying “ Come Sammy aren’t you ready for *summut*? it is the first time he is come from home, and he is going to see his aunt Peggy!”

From that time she never ceased supplying him with eatables, the moment he had dispatched one thing presented him with another, observing that he must have something to amuse him or he would not be a good boy. Notwithstanding this he soon became very restless, and was not content to remain on the knees of the farmer who had good naturedly taken him up, but he began scrambling from one person's lap to the other, annoying each in their turn; and having a large piece of Spanish liquorice, which he amused himself by putting in and out his mouth, he left his marks on most of them.

Mrs. Hamilton remonstrated with his mother, who said, "indeed he was a very naughty boy," and added "but it *ban't*

no use *my* speaking to him, for he won't never mind *me*. Sammy dear, do you sit still now!"

"Let me alone, or I'll kick you," cried the dutiful Samuel making faces at his mamma, and he began to howl most musically; and tho' he did not shed a tear, his mother begged him not to cry but come and kiss her. Mrs. Hamilton declared that if he came near her again she would certainly give him something to cry for.—To Sammy's howling succeeded another misery, which however had been partially experienced from their first entrance into the coach, this was a strong *effluvia* of fish, whose funeral obsequies had been delayed much longer than propriety could sanction, and which tho'

doomed to be entombed in the human form, was fit only for the consumption of cats, at least so it might justly be concluded from its now most distinguishing quality, as its influence on the olfactory nerves became every moment more powerful. At length Mrs. Hamilton expressed it her opinion that there must be some fish under the seat from the offensive smell that prevailed.

"Aye, very likely, very likely indeed ma'am," said the farmer "my mistrsss (meaning his wife) is monstrous fond of fish, so knowing she loved it so well I bough her a few mackarel at S—— and got them packed in this little basket, but they be as sweet as nuts I'm sure, or I should smell them myself, and I can't say

as I *smells* any thing, don't mean no offence ma'am, it is my wish to be civil to every body more *specially* would not be *unpurlite* to the ladies ; hope I don't *cram* you :: :: !” he added to the young woman next him, and who kept edging as far off him as she could.

“ Indeed, sir,” she pertly replied, “ I can't say that fish-basket is a very pleasant neighbour, I am sure it stinks enough to poison one.”

“ Well, indeed, I am sorry for that,” said the good-humoured farmer, “ but can't say I *smells* it, *howsomever* if so be its disagreeable to the company, I'll e'en go outside, if there's ever a place.”

Mrs. Hamilton proposed his sending the basket outside, for as he discovered so much civility, she did not wish to presume on it to compel him to do what he might not like; but he said, "No, he and his basket must go together, it was a present for his dame, and he would not trust it to any body's charge;" nor, indeed, would he have found any body very ready to offer their services on the occasion. The coach soon after stopped (as it did almost every mile on some account or other) and they got rid of the farmer, and the *odoriferous* offering destined for his spouse. Sammy was put in his vacant place, and soon fell asleep, to the joy and relief of all the passengers. The infant behaved very well and was in no way troublesome, except from the

nonsense the mother talked to it. The band-box bearer, who had a book in her hand, and affected to be reading, (though the impatience with which she turned over several pages at a time proved that she was not much entertained with the production) now, weary of taciturnity, accosted Sammy's mamma ; for she perceived that the two ladies did not discover the slightest inclination to converse, and the fiddler she considered beneath her notice. “ I suppose, ma'am you are going all the way to ——— ” “ Yes, sure, aunt Peggy lives a mile t'other side of it, and we shall walk that. I dare say you have heard talk of Peggy Jones, she was a beauty in her time and married one Horrocks, a joiner and house-carpenter.” “ No, I can't say I have

ma'am, I can't say *as* I know any *joiners* or *house-carpenters* *neither*." Attempting to look consequential, she continued, "I am going on a visit to a *lady*, and I expect to go to a great many balls, indeed she has got a most elegant ball-room in her own house;" (this *lady* kept the principal inn at the next town,) turning over the leaves of the book, she continued, "I borrowed this book from my brothers library; thinking I might find it dull on the road, he has a most charming assortment equal to any *other gentleman's* in the country, (well he might, for he kept a circulating library) but I have been very unfortunate in my choice, for this is the stupidest stuff I ever read, and who would have thought it by the name, "Virginia, or the Peace of Amiens!"

dear me, to be sure I expected some ancient tale, a romance like, all about *wars* and *fighting* and that. I thought the *Peace of Amiens* sounded like something very long ago, about William the Conqueror, or Edward the Black Prince; but, to be sure this is such nonsense, nothing in the world but what *might* happen, and there is hardly a love-scene once in a volume, and then they are so stiff and formal and unnatural. To be sure *such* people now a days *does purtend* to be *author—esses* it is quite ridiculous, and there they *purtend* to write a *novel*, and then give you something full of history or religion, it is quite an imposition, one might as well read a chapter in the bible; it is a shame for such people to set themselves up who *does not*

know *nothing* at all of what a novel should be, no never so much as common grammar."

"Aye, sure, it *bant* right," returned her auditor, who doubted not that all she had said was very just. "It's infamous!" returned the able critic, "it's infamous for people to go for to take one in in that sort of a way. Now, there's the Animated Skeleton, More Ghosts, and the Bloody Hand! and such like, now those beautiful things should set an example, and people should write like *them* sort, if they *purtends* to write at all."

The fair arbiter of literary merit continued to display the correctness of her

judgment and refinement of her taste, to the infinite amusement of Mrs. Hamilton, till the coach stopped at the end of the stage. Here they had the satisfaction of getting rid of their ill-assorted companions, and Constance and her mother, rejoiced in the hope of having the coach to themselves, but ere it drove off again, a middled aged gentleman of a prepossessing aspect, took possession of a seat. His conciliating looks (while with the true stamp of gentility he attempted not to force his conversation, yet seemed willing to enter into discourse if encouraged so to do) were well calculated to dispel the reserve, natural, and indeed proper towards strangers in such casual encounters.

As they were slowly ascending a hill, they were overtaken by two very handsome horses, conducted by a groom, who the gentleman accosted as he passed, giving some trifling order that proved he was the master. This further convinced the ladies that he was what he appeared to be, and a friendly, but violent jolt soon after, by producing a mutual smile at the awkward attitudes it threw them into, seemed to have the instantaneous effect of introducing them to each other, and the gentleman immediately made some observation on the ruggedness of the road, and by degrees an agreeable conversation ensued between him and Mrs. Hamilton, for both were competent to converse on general subjects.

Constance continued silent and abstracted, for her whole mind was absorbed in her unhappiness, and her heart bursting to relieve itself in tears. Her mother repeatedly endeavoured to draw her into conversation, and the stranger seconded her efforts, but in vain. He perceived with regret so young and lovely a girl apparently labouring under the heaviest dejection, and endeavoured to secure her attention by relating various entertaining anecdotes connected with scenes he had visited abroad, and which were well calculated to afford amusement.

CHAPTER XVII.

ABOUT two o'clock they stopped to dine, and during the meal, which the stranger partook of but slightly, he expressed his regret that he must soon be deprived of the ladie's company, adding that he was going to pay a short visit to his nephew, whose residence lay about eight miles further on the road. On re-entering the coach, he desired the coachman to let him out at the gates of

Ashgrove Park. In the course of conversation the stranger had alluded to his being a married man, and this increased the confidence with which Mrs. Hamilton addressed him. The coach was still standing at the inn-door, when a person came out of the house, dressed in every respect like the coachman, and the ladies would really have supposed him to have been such had they not recognised the features of Mr. Peter Greaves, to whose person they were no strangers. He was accompanied by a young man, whose countenance also was familiar to them, and in whom they soon recollectec the noble ensign, who had a few years before been recruiting at D—, and whose attractions had been so highly appre-

ciated by some of the young ladies there.

Mr. Dulks had probably by this time rose at least one step in rank ; certain it is, he had gained many in presumption, and thought himself a man of very great consequence from being the chosen intimate of Mr. Peter Greaves, who found in him a spirit perfectly congenial to his own. He had been his guest for some time, having obtained leave of absence for that purpose ; they were now on their way to London. Greaves addressed the coachman, saying, “ We don’t want you coachy, I’ll *spank* them along, so get out of the way till I mount. My barouche broke down coming into this d—d town, and it will take a month to

mend it, so off we go in the *rattle-trap*. Hey, Dulks!" clapping the satellite on the shoulder, as a signal for applause, and the never failing laugh prefaced the elegant sentence, "by George! you are a queer one! but hang me if I don't go inside, perhaps I shall have some fun."

As this accomplished youth took his place in the coach, Mrs. Hamilton addressed the coachman, saying, "Remember, you have charge of our lives, and are liable to a penalty for resigning the reins!" "Lord bless you ma'am, you are safe enough. I sits close along side the gentleman: law, ma'am it *ban't* once in a hundred that I *drives*: my lord Addlebrain and sir Harry Blackjambes and a

dozen others goes by the coach *a purpose* to drive." Mrs. Hamilton was not ignorant that many an honourable and right honourable, in these eccentric days condescended to imitate stage-coachmen, and by their example emulated the less distinguished to be equally ridiculous.

As Greaves mounted the box he muttered, "Hang the *old one* what does she mean?" and added in an elevated tone, "Coacky, have you seen my bloods that I drive four-in-hand? bought them from one of the club, five hundred a piece, that's your sort my boy! come along." Mrs. Hamilton was aware that young Greaves drove a barouche and four, and as the coachman sat beside him, and she had given him a caution, she enter-

tained no apprehensions of the consequences of his acting as driver.

Mr. Dulks claimed acquaintance with the ladies by a familiar bow, and expressed a hope that they had been well since he had had the pleasure of seeing them *last!* Now, the *first* time they had been in company with him had been the *last*, for only *once* had they ever met in society ; they had often encountered him in their walks, but a distant bow had been all that had passed on those occasions ; yet by the manner Mr. Dulks now put on, one might have concluded, they had been on intimate terms, as he began speaking with great freedom of all the persons in the neighbourhood of D—. The reserved replies that followed his questions, and

the repellent air with which they were given, would have silenced any one less forward, or less silly. The stranger, who was of so opposite a cast, instantly penetrated into the kind of character that was now obtruded on them, and perceiving that he would completely interrupt all rational conversation, he resolved he should contribute to their amusement, in the only way in which he was capable, by his extreme absurdity.

" You found D—— an agreeable quarter I suppose ! " observed the gentleman, whose name was Maitland. Mr, Dulks returned—" Very pleasant sir, I had monstrous fun there among the girls, they could not *catch* me, I was too sharp for them ; I had no objection to a little

amusement and flirted with them all round, but I begged leave to retain my liberty. Why sir, there was not one among them that had more than a few thousands, and that will never do for Jack Dulks! *fifty thousand, nothing under fifty,* that perhaps might tempt me to have pity on some sighing damsel."

Mr. Maitland, without any effort to restrain it, indulged a fit of laughter, as he very deliberately surveyed the insignificant person and ugly countenance of him who was thus vaunting of his success with the fair sex, and asserting the magnitude of his pretensions. Mr. Dulks looked more silly than usual, on finding himself the subject of such extraordinary merriment, in which Mrs. Hamilton could

not resist joining, and a smile of derision passed over the features of Constance, while she thought that the women who could admit such a man to an intimacy, or even as a visiting acquaintance, well merited to be spoken of in the degrading manner in which he had alluded to them.

Mr. Maitland not willing to lose the entertainment Dulks's folly afforded him, observed as soon as he could suppress his laughter,

"No doubt sir, you left many aching hearts behind you." Dulks smiled complacently, and returned, "To be sure the attentions I received were very flattering, not a house in the town or neighbourhood

that was not open to me. Poor Miss Topping, Mrs. Hamilton," continued he appealing to that lady, " Poor Miss Topping was extremely ill after I left D—. Poor thing, I was very sorry for her, she and Miss Bullock had a violent quarrel about me. I—I—I can't say exactly on what account, for really I was equally intimate with both, I am not aware of having paid more attention to one than the other, I am sure I had not the least idea of any thing *serious* with either, but some misunderstanding took place, and poor Miss Topping took it very much to heart. I really can't say I was sorry to quit the place, a young man can hardly escape getting entangled, the girls are in such a d---h hurry to

get husbands, it is hardly possible to escape."

"O my countrywomen!" sighed Constance to herself, "How are you degraded, when such an animal as this shall presume to boast of your assiduities! O how cautious ought ye to be in your conduct towards the other sex, when neither ugliness, vulgarity, or the most glaring deficiency of every mental attraction, is insufficient to suppress vanity in the breast of man, or to prevent his imputing to you, designs of all others the most flattering to his self love."

"Really sir, your escape was most miraculous," observed Mr. Maitland; "I hope neither of these unfortunate ladies

died a victim to your cruelty!" Mr. Dulks affected not to hear this, and as the coach was now flying along with great velocity, its rumbling might well be supposed to drown the voice; but Mr. Dulks elevated his tone as he went on, "No doubt sir, you have heard of the famous Alexandrina Fitz-Algeron, the first genius of the age, she resides in that neighbourhood: she is certainly a most *extraordinary* clever woman, *I* must allow that *myself*. *I* was one of her chosen friends, she often consulted me on literary subjects of importance, *I* visited her continually, in short there was not a creature of any consequence whom *I* did not visit."

"What sir," cried Mr. Maitland, with an aspect of extreme astonishment,

"Were you admitted at sir Henry Mansfield's?" Mr. Maitland was no stranger to sir Henry, or his place of abode.

"No," said Mr. Dulks, "I would not go there, I would not be seen within the doors of such a man; Mr. Anthony Greaves his worthy opponent, (whose son is now driving us,) was my most particular friend, and nothing but the villainy of that Mansfield could have prevented his gaining his election."

"Hold, hold sir," cried Mr. Maitland, "This is very improper language to use in speaking of sir Henry Mansfield, a man no less respectable in his domestic character, than in his public one; the ladies and the worthy baronet are equally in-

debted to you for the *delicacy* and *propriety* with which you mention them."

Dulks looked completely confounded, Mrs. Hamilton and Constance longed to have him ducked in a horse-pond, nor had the ire in their bosoms subsided, ere they were likely to behold the fruition of their wishes, for young Greaves intending to pass a gentleman's curricle in great style, drove the coach into the hedge, and overturned it! One united shriek followed this dreadful catastrophe, while the outside passengers were sent flying in every direction, as if a mine had exploded, and scattered them around to destruction. The horses fortunately remained quite still, and the gentleman from the curricle (which had narrowly

escaped being overwhelmed by the falling coach) together with his two attendants, hastened to succour the unfortunate sufferers.

Constance had fallen on her mother, and escaped uninjured, excepting from the effects of terror, which was greatly appeased when Mrs. Hamilton exclaimed, "I am not hurt, I am not hurt," as the gentleman having opened the door was dragging out Constance, who stretched her arms in speechless anxiety towards her mother. Her fears again assailed her, on perceiving blood on Mrs. Hamilton's dress, which was also much soiled with mud, but she declared she was not sensible of having received any serious in-

jury, and that the blood could not be her's.

Mr. Maitland next scrambled out, he had been pillow'd on the unfortunate Dulks, who had been undermost, and though the window was down at the moment of the somerset, it had been thrown up with violence by the overturn, was broke, and had cut his face most terribly; added to which a large puddle in which the vehicle repos'd, rapidly overflow'd the interior, and covered the wounded hero with its adhesive particles, thus rendering his fate in effect little better than if he had actually been dragg'd though the horse-pond his fair companions would have consigned him to; barring however the wounds he had

now received. Seeing his wretched condition, on being extricated from the coach, they kindly lent him their assistance, while the gentlemen hastened to afford relief to the other sufferers.

Mr. Maitland had sprained his wrist, but he made no mention of so trifling a hurt; an exclamation had escaped him at sight of the gentleman who had come to succour them, which led the ladies to conclude the latter was his nephew, in which supposition they were confirmed by the stranger exclaiming, "My uncle! I was coming to meet you, but expected you would have been on horse back; are you much hurt?"

"No, no," said Mr. Maitland, and each

hurried to different spots, attracted by the groans and bitter cries produced by the excruciating torture of dislocated limbs, or frightful contusions. There were few who had not received some injury, but among these was the coachman, who had perceived that the coach was going over, and had jumped from the box, and secured his own personal safety, *that* being his first consideration, while had he seized the reins in time, he might perhaps have prevented the fatal accident. But he who had been the occasion of it, was justly punished by being the greatest sufferer, for he was the only one whose life appeared in danger. He lay insensible and covered with blood. This was the *second* time in one day that his attempt to display his prowess as a first rate whip

had cost him dear, for he had by his awkwardness overturned his own barouche, and smashed it all to pieces, but ashamed of owning it, he had pretended it had broken *down*, and having then escaped unhurt, he obstinately persevered in essaying what he did not understand, and insisted on driving the stage coach, in imitation of the prevailing folly of the day, without at all regarding the many lives he endangered, or the sufferings he might occasion.

He was conveyed to an adjacent cottage, as were also two or three others, who were incapable of proceeding, while a surgeon was sent for. As Mrs. Hamilton endeavoured to staunch the blood that was still flowing from the wounds of the

wretched Dulks, with which she was already stained, and had also partaken of his mud bath, she ejaculated her thanks for her providential escape, in which Constance fervently joined.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE coachman, with the assistance of another man, had now raised the coach, which he declared had not received the smallest damage, and he invited such of the passengers as were able to proceed to re-ascend it, which some of them did, after having plentifully abused him, and sworn they would prosecute him. But Mrs. Hamilton assured him that neither she nor her daughter would again venture in

it; for even could they have overcome the terror which still shook their nerves, they would have been afraid to have trusted themselves again in the crazy vehicle, from the probability that it would break down, owing to the shock it had sustained. Finding that the next town was not more than four miles off, she determined to walk to it, and proceed from thence in a chaise, as she was secure of recovering the fare she had paid for the coach by a detail of the neglect which had caused the accident to the proprietor.

Mr. Dulks had now contrived to find his way to the hovel that sheltered the hopeful heir of Turnpenny Hall, who seemed in a fair way of resigning his

share in transmitting his *hereditary honours*.

The ladies were now joined by Mr. Maitland and his nephew, whom he named to them as sir Frederic Raymond. He was a young man of an agreeable countenance, with a good figure, set off by an air of fashion, and rendered prepossessing by an easy and courteous address. On hearing that the ladies proposed walking, he offered to conduct them in his curricle, but Mrs. Hamilton politely declined his civility: both the gentlemen were in fact strangers to her, and though apparently perfectly respectable, she knew nothing of their characters. Had her daughter been absent she would gladly have availed herself of

sir Frederic's proposal, but she was not sure that she might not hereafter have cause to regret that Constance had been seen in his carriage, and that they had given him a claim on their gratitude.

Sir Frederic then proposed that as his residence was scarce a quarter of a mile distant, (and he dared not as a single man invite the ladies to repair there,) he should dispatch one of the servants for his close carriage, which he hoped they would not refuse to make use of. One of the grooms instantly flew off, though Mrs. Hamilton begged he might be recalled, saying she should immediately proceed on foot, and requesting she might not detain the gentlemen, she moved on.

Sir Frederic declared he could not possibly permit them to go alone, and recommending his uncle (whose wrist was now very much swelled,) to allow the remaining groom to drive him home in the curricle, he said he would walk on with the ladies, and continue with them till the carriage overtook them. Mrs. Hamilton professed herself extremely obliged by his politeness, but begged leave to decline any attendance; but sir Frederic was too gallant to suffer her scruples to have weight, and persisted in accompanying them; and having bade an almost friendly adieu to Mr. Maitland, (who had been induced that morning by a lowering sky and the apprehension of rain, to enter the unlucky coach in preference to riding on horse back,) they

walked leisurely on. Sir Frederic appeared extremely lively, and Mrs. Hamilton believed that in his natural character he was what is termed a *great rattle*, but the sedateness of her air and the taciturnity of Constance, repelled his habitual jocularity, which yet broke forth at intervals in some ridiculous observation or ludicrous metaphor. Mrs. Hamilton rejoiced, when on looking back she perceived an elegant chariot, which by sir Frederic's expressions of regret at its so soon overtaking them, she knew to be his. She no longer objected to making use of it, as by so doing she got rid of sir Frederic, to whom she again repeated her thanks, and he having handed them in, and expressed a hope that at some future period he might again have the

happiness of encountering them, bade them farewell, and galloped off on the horse his servant had brought for him.

At the end of four miles, when they reached the town, they relinquished the elegant equipage, and Mrs. Hamilton ordered a chaise, purposing to proceed one stage further that night; but here they were delayed above two hours, there being no horses at home and evening was fast closing in, when they again set forward. They now became sensible of the aches and bruises, the effects of the *accident*, which they had not been aware of at the moment they had been inflicted. Constance's spirits were quite worn out, all her sorrows seemed redoubled, she sunk back in the corner of the carriage, and as

increasing darkness shaded her from observation, freely indulged her tears. In happier times this had been the most sociable part of the day, this was the period that had been devoted to recreation, and how often at that hour had she joined the dear inhabitants of the abbey in the *really* lively dance produced by the spontaneous inclination of the moment, when mirthful hearts dictated the jocund exercise, and not the formal necessity of *appearing* lively. Now she was hastening from those beloved scenes, where still hovered her aching heart and reluctant spirit. She grieved no less for Aretas than for herself, for she understood his feelings too well not to be convinced he must be as unhappy as she was, and a total despondency came over her as she

reflected how very long a time might elapse before she should again see him, and what sad changes must take place, ere she should be permitted that gratification, *such* perhaps as would make her voluntarily fly his presence.

They were just crossing a heath; the wind whistled round the chaise and shook the crazy glasses, all without appeared as dreary and forlorn as her own breast, and it seemed a moment fitted for deeds of darkness. Mrs. Hamilton felt a degree of dread steal over her, as the idea struck her (engendered by the loneliness of the scene) that the place they were traversing was peculiarly adapted to the perpetration of a robbery. Scarcely had the thought struck her, when two men gal-

loped pass the carriage, one on each side, then suddenly drew in their horses that they might be overtaken. Mrs. Hamilton trembled in every limb, while she hastily took out her purse in readiness to present to the villain who should demand it, being resolved not to exasperate him to ill usage by delay. Constance observed her action, and having also perceived the men, was instantly assailed by similar terrors, and she grasped her mother's arm in an agony of apprehension. One of the men now accosted the post boy, and their fears were confirmed, when he stopped, and the other man rode up to the chaise window.

“Here, here is my purse,” cried Mrs. Hamilton, “only do not molest us!”

He took not the purse, but seized the hand that presented it, exclaiming “ It is Mrs. Hamilton !” What a revulsion of the feelings did these words produce ! yet not their purport, but the voice that uttered them ! Constance gave a cry of joyful amazement, and quite overcome by the astonishment and pleasure which occasioned so sudden a change in her sensations, she was for a few moments uncertain of where she was, or what had happened.

Apprehensions of a new description, had now taken possession of Mrs Hamilton, excited by the dread that Aretas had pursued them without the sanction of sir Henry : but they vanished when she heard the voice of her son ; and young Mans-

field exclaimed, "I have a letter for you from my father." From this she augured well; so did Constance, whom these words recalled to a sense of what was passing; and she held out her hand to her brother, which however Aretas caught and grasped impressively. A variety of natural questions were hastily exchanged, but Mrs. Hamilton put a stop to them by observing, that they could not be far from the town, and that they must defer the gratification of their mutual curiosity, till they had reached the inn, where she intended remaining for the night.

The young men did not again lose sight of the carriage, which they could never have overtaken, but for the casualties that had delayed their friends on the road.

They had been more successful in procuring tolerable horses after the time, when we last lost sight of them, but had been again reduced to despair, when at the last stage, they had heard that the coach had been overturned, and had come in without the persons whom they described. The strongest alarm took possession of their breasts, but being informed that two ladies had afterwards arrived in a gentleman's carriage, and had but a very short time before proceeded on in a hired chaise, their hopes revived, they continued the pursuit, and it has already been seen they were not disappointed.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHILE a comfortable meal was preparing for the little party, Mrs. Hamilton retired with her daughter to read sir Henry's letter. Its contents were brief, but energetic; they assured her of the unalterable regard of his whole family, and conveyed their united entreaties that she would return. He added "I have condemned Aretas to two years exile, during which I forbid all intercourse with the

object of his affections (after he has seen her and you safely home) but if at the expiration of his probation, his inclination continues the same, I shall request you to receive him as your son-in-law, and to use your influence with your daughter (if at that period her heart should remain unengaged) to induce her to make him happy."

The letter concluded with sincere protestations of affection, and some most gratifying comments on the manner in which Mrs. Hamilton had acted, and repeated solicitations for her return, which was urged as if it would be conferring an obligation on sir Henry himself. Mrs. Hamilton put it into her daughter's hand saying " We may go home again my love

but you will perceive that it remains for you to be most scrupulously cautious in your behaviour towards Aretas, for the short time he will be with us."

Constance, was by this address prepared not to expect too much, and the purport of sir Henry's letter, proved more favourable than she had dared to hope. She should return to the companions of her youth, and the scenes that she loved; she was not forbidden to hope that the object of her choice might one day be her's, and tho' condemned to a long absence, she might indulge the sweetest anticipations; in short her present prospects were so infinitely superior to what they had been, but a short time before, that by comparison, she was in Paradise.

During that evening, and the succeeding day, which they passed in retracing their way home, the sweetest complacency marked her features, while joy sparkled in the eyes of Aretas; but by their looks alone, could they form any idea of each other's feelings, for Mrs. Hamilton took care they should have no opportunity of expressing them. Yet they both felt confident of the stability of their mutual affection, and they parted at the Cottage door, firmly assured of each other's fidelity, and by his fervent pressure of her hand Constance felt bound to Aretas for ever.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ensuing day, our hero accompanied by Mr. Hatfield, took the rout to Scotland; every member of the family witnessed his departure with sincere regret, and his affectionate parents felt it impossible to reconcile themselves to the idea of so long a separation from him. "Remember" said his father, at parting, "Remember my Aretas, I have promised not to thwart your wishes when they shall

be fixed and confirmed by *time*, but recollect also that nothing could make me so happy, as to hear that you had conquered them ; and that I hope and expect you will endeavour to do so."—With swimming eyes Aretas took a last look at the beloved group that poured blessings on his receding form.

"But still as he rode, he turned him round,
To list to the Ruthven's mournful sound !
O thou can'st not think how its voice was dear,
When its last faint murmurs met his ear ;
For prophetic was his answering sigh,
To the stream that he loved in his infancy!" *

Sir Henry wrote to lord Shurgrove,

* Miss Holford.

and candidly informed him of the juvenile prepossession (as he termed it) that at present affected his son, and of the means he had resorted to, to enable him to get the better of it. The arrangement between his lordship and sir Henry had been made with the *proviso*, that their mutual wishes did not interfere with their children's inclinations, but which indeed, they had thought extremely improbable, as both were so young that it was unlikely they should have formed any prior attachment. Sir Henry had intended his son should have joined him in town the ensuing winter, when he would have introduced him to lord Shurgrove, whose daughter he believed he could not have beheld with indifference; but sir Henry still hoped, that at some future

period, his desire might be fulfilled, for he thought Aretas's attachment would hardly stand the test of two years absence from its object; *years* too, which he determined should be passed in visiting a variety of scenes, calculated to create an entire new train of ideas in his youthful mind; which by their intrusion would doubtless supersede some of his early impressions, while they excited an enlarged sphere of thought, and presented objects in a very different point of view to that in which he had been accustomed to contemplate them.

Lord Shurgrove would probably be in no hurry to part with his daughter, and sir Henry still flattered himself he should behold the accomplishment of his hopes.

He did not conceive Constance could be seriously attached to one, who she had so long been accustomed to love as a child, and he was convinced her mother would do all in her power to make her forget Aretas as a *lover*, and he trusted she would succeed. Lady Mansfield, on the contrary, had now so thoroughly reconciled herself to the idea of Constance as her daughter-in-law, that she would have felt uneasy had she imagined it likely Aretas would change: she repaired to the Cottage the day after Mrs. Hamilton's return, and having spent some hours with her in the most friendly communion, she insisted on taking Constance home with her. But to Constance, the Abbey appeared deserted, it was in vain she endeavoured to recover her spirits and the na-

tural tone of her mind. But not so was it with Horace, (tho' he much regretted the absence of his friend) he too, was again an inmate at the Abbey, and had ever in mind the declaration sir Henry had made concerning the light in which he should behold an attachment between his *protegee* and one of his daughters.

Amelia Mansfield (the eldest) partook in a considerable degree of that animation which characterized her brother, and not a little in the same propensity to exercising her utmost influence over those she loved, or who loved her. Isabella, her sister was all tenderness, all feeling, easily overcome by even a semblance of distress, and unable to bring her mind to believe it possible, that such wretches could exist,

as daily experience proved the world to be infested by. Both her youth and disposition led her to conceive every body what they appeared to be, and guileless herself, she never detected evil in others. Amelia possessed more penetration; and tho' innocence itself might have made her mind its residence, she was not blind to the absurdities of others, nor indeed to her own, and could not always resist laughing at them. She had a shrewd suspicion, that she had obtained very secure dominion over Horace's heart, but fancying her own to be but slightly *if at all* affected, she was provoked with herself for feeling uneasy, as the termination of the vacation drew near: but ere it arrived, Horace was hurried into something very like a declaration of his passion, but

Amelia only laughed at him, and though she left him room to doubt of his ascendancy over her affections, there was a slight confusion in her manner, that still permitted him to hope he might ultimately obtain them.

CHAPTER XXI.

ARETAS spent a month in wandering over the “Minstrel Land!” whether in “Lowland Plain,” or “Highland Steep,” the image of his Constance was the inseparable companion of his thoughts. She was the spirit of the mountains, who in bright colours spread the visions of the future before his sight. She was the elfin sprite whose “witch note” murmured in his ear, promise of joys

to come! He loved to wander amidst the rugged scenery; his youthful and romantic mind felt with enthusiasm the whole force of its influence, he beheld with veneration the objects that had been immortalized by their native bard, and thought Scotland worthy of a *Scott*.

From scenes which future ages shall term *classic*, Aretas was recalled by a letter from his father to Mr. Hatfield, containing the plan of their future journey, which was to terminate in a manner most agreeable to him since he was forbidden to repair to the spot most dear to him. They were to return by a circuitous route, embracing every place of any note, by Cumberland, Westmorland,

Lancashire, Cheshire, through Wales to Somersetshire and Devon to Plymouth.

"This," continued sir Henry, in his letter, "will be pretty well traversing the island from one end to the other, and as you went by a different route, you will almost have made the complete tour of it. Lady Mansfield's brother, captain Allenby, you know commands a frigate, which I find is just appointed to take out lord R—— to Palermo: nothing could be more agreeable or advantageous than a voyage up the Mediterranean, and I have often heard Aretas express a wish to accompany his uncle, in case he should be ordered there, and he may now be gratified. I have written to my brother-

in-law, to inform him, Aretas will join him at Plymouth, to which port his ship is ordered round. It will certainly be three weeks or a month before she sails from thence, so that you will have sufficient time to loiter on your journey. I hope, my dear friend, you will have no objection to continuing with Aretas till he leaves England, when we shall impatiently anticipate your return, for you well know what I suffer by thus banishing my boy from my presence, and nothing, but the prospect of advantage to him, could enable me to make such a sacrifice of my feelings. His mother is angry with me for sending him abroad, but I could not forgive myself if I were to permit him to lose so excellent an opportunity of visiting the most interest-

ing objects recorded in history. The island of Sicily alone would be a sufficient attraction to him, who has ever evinced such anxiety to behold the monuments of antiquity and ancient splendour."

We shall not attend our hero through every stage of his tour, but taking a direct flight for Plymouth, quietly await his arrival there, which took place about two months after his departure from home. At the principal hotel, (whither they were driven) the gentlemen were met by captain Allenby, who had been apprized by letter of the day on which he might expect his nephew. This gentleman was about forty, and had been married several years; he was a frank,

open-hearted, amiable man, and received Aretas in the most affectionate manner. He informed him that lord R——, (for whose reception his ship had been fitted out) had arrived a few days before ; that his baggage, &c. was already embarked, and that he and his family were then staying at the house of the general, who commanded at Plymouth ; but most probably they would go on board on the morrow. Captain Allenby continued, “ I have engaged you and Mr. Hatfield, to dine at the general’s to day, where a very large party is to be assembled, and we are all to go to a ball, which takes place here this evening.”

“ I have not the pleasure of knowing the general,” said Aretas. “ But he

knows you," returned his uncle, "and, on my telling him I expected you and Mr. Hatfield, he begged I would request you both to dine with him." Aretas observed that it was now so late, there would not be time for his cloaths to be unpacked, and for him to arrange himself with propriety for such an occasion before dinner; but that if his uncle would make his excuses to the general for not dining with him, he would join the party at the ball. Mr. Hatfield begged to be included in the apology, when captain Allenby declared he would remain with them, and they would all dine together, but this they would not permit him to do, and he hurried away as it was already past five which was the appointed dinner-hour. He was no sooner gone

than Aretas protested he would much rather not have gone to the ball, had it not been that he was anxious to be presented to lord R—— and his family, in whose society he should probably pass so much of his time for some weeks to come. Mr. Hatfield said he thought he would be to blame not to go to the ball, independent of that consideration, for as he was extremely fond of dancing, he could not fail to derive amusement from it.

" Oh ! I have no zest for those sort of things now," said Aretas, with a deep sigh, as he thought of the delight he used to experience at some private balls where Constance had been his partner. He fell into a melancholy reverie, which lasted till dinner was served ; however,

he eat heartily, and took rather more wine than usual, in hopes of raising his spirits, but when he quitted the room to repair to his toilet, he said, "I shall certainly not dance."

CHAPTER XXII.

HE returned, after a tolerable length of time, attired with as much elegance as the fashion of the day would permit, and with some appearance of impatience he asked Mr. Hatfield (who had also changed his dress) if it was not time to go? Mr. Hatfield said he thought not. "O, I wish it was over," cried Aretas, "I quite dread the thoughts of it." Whether he wished it *over* might per-

haps be questioned, but that he wished it *arrived* was very evident, for five minutes had not elapsed, when he again took out his watch, and cast a look of inquiry on his companion.

Just at that moment captain Allenby was announced. He told them he had seized the opportunity of making his escape when the gentlemen had ascended to the drawing-room, and he would repair with them to the ball, which he thought would be more agreeable, as they were total strangers. Aretas now asked after Mrs. Allenby, which the hurry of their meeting in the morning had prevented his before doing : his uncle returned—
“ I left her, dear soul, very unhappy, as she always is at parting with me, while

my ship was at Spit-head, she came down to Ryde in the Isle of Wight, and there I left her, for she is extremely partial to the place, and I trust is now quite comfortable in the society of your sisters, and their friend, Miss Hamilton !” Aretas started, and looked astonished.

Captain Allenby continued “We wrote a joint letter to your father, to beg he would let the young people spend a few weeks at Ryde ; we positively declared we would take no refusal, and sir Henry consented that they should go and console my poor Harriet, and I hope they are by this time with her.”

Aretas was surprized by this intelligence, as the last letter he had received from his

father had made no mention of it, but he recollect ed it was dated nearly a fortnight back, doubtless before this excursion had been decided on. He scarcely knew whether to rejoice, or lament, that Constance had accompanied his sisters, for though he would have felt happy in any thing that could have contributed to her gratification, he yet dreaded, that in wandering from the scenes of their childhood, and from objects that must keep alive his remembrance in her heart, she would cease to think of him with that degree of tenderness, which he felt confident, at present characterised her affection for him, and which he gloried in as the greatest blessing heaven could bestow on him, and as that which was to sweeten all his future days.

He became suddenly very thoughtful, and when his uncle asked him if he was ready for the ball, he started and looked as if that had been the first time he had heard of it. Captain Allenby rallied him on his obvious abstraction, and bade him, if he had a heart to lose, keep strict guard over it, or he would not answer for his retaining it after that night.

Aretas smiled mournfully, again sighed, nor could he recover his absent fit, till the gaily illuminated ball-room, crowded with elegantly dressed women, and men, in the glittering uniforms of army and navy, assumed a natural influence over his youthful imagination, by concentrating his ideas, and fixing them on the

surrounding scene. They sauntered to the upper end of the room, and captain Allenby observed that the general's party had not yet arrived. Several gentlemen accosted him, and asked, with some appearance of anxiety, if he had not dined at the general's, and whether lord R—— would not attend the ball. A fine looking young man, wearing the uniform of a post captain, bedecked with various orders, now addressed captain Allenby, saying, "There will be no ball to night!" "No? why not, I am sure there are people enough assembled here!"

"That may be, but there will be no ball if Miss Clarendon does not come!"

I am resolved not to dance with any body else."

" I would not have you despair of seeing her," returned captain Allenby, laughing, " for she certainly intended coming half an hour ago. But as to dancing with her! *there*, indeed, I fear you will be disappointed ; for I heard lord R—— rallying her on her numerous engagements, and accusing her of having formed twice as many as she could fulfil."

" And, suppose," cried the young man, with an air of exultation, his eyes sparkling with pleasure, " suppose *I* should be engaged to dance the *first* set with her."

" Oh ! " exclaimed a field-officer, who had just joined them, " he has been boasting of that these three days, and came here before the candles were lighted for fear he should not be time enough." Each laughed : the naval officer taking the joke with perfect good humour ; he continued, " Lady R—— will *not* dance, so the *honourable* Miss Clarendon will open the ball, and *I* shall have the high honour, and supreme felicity of leading off with—Oh ! such a dancer ! you never beheld in your life. I was at a little hop the general gave the first evening they came, and I took care to solicit her for to-night—Oh ! she is the most heavenly creature I ever beheld."

Aretas was no longer at a loss to un-

derstand the cause of the anxiety that prevailed among the gentlemen for the arrival of lord R——; concluding that the interest his lordship excited arose entirely from his being the parent of this enchantress, whose charms seemed to have wrought so potent an effect on those who had been exposed to their influence and which appeared to communicate from one to the other as they listened to the lavish praises bestowed on her. A kind of suspense hung over the company, as the master of the ceremonies conceived it a compliment due to the party not to commence dancing before it arrived.

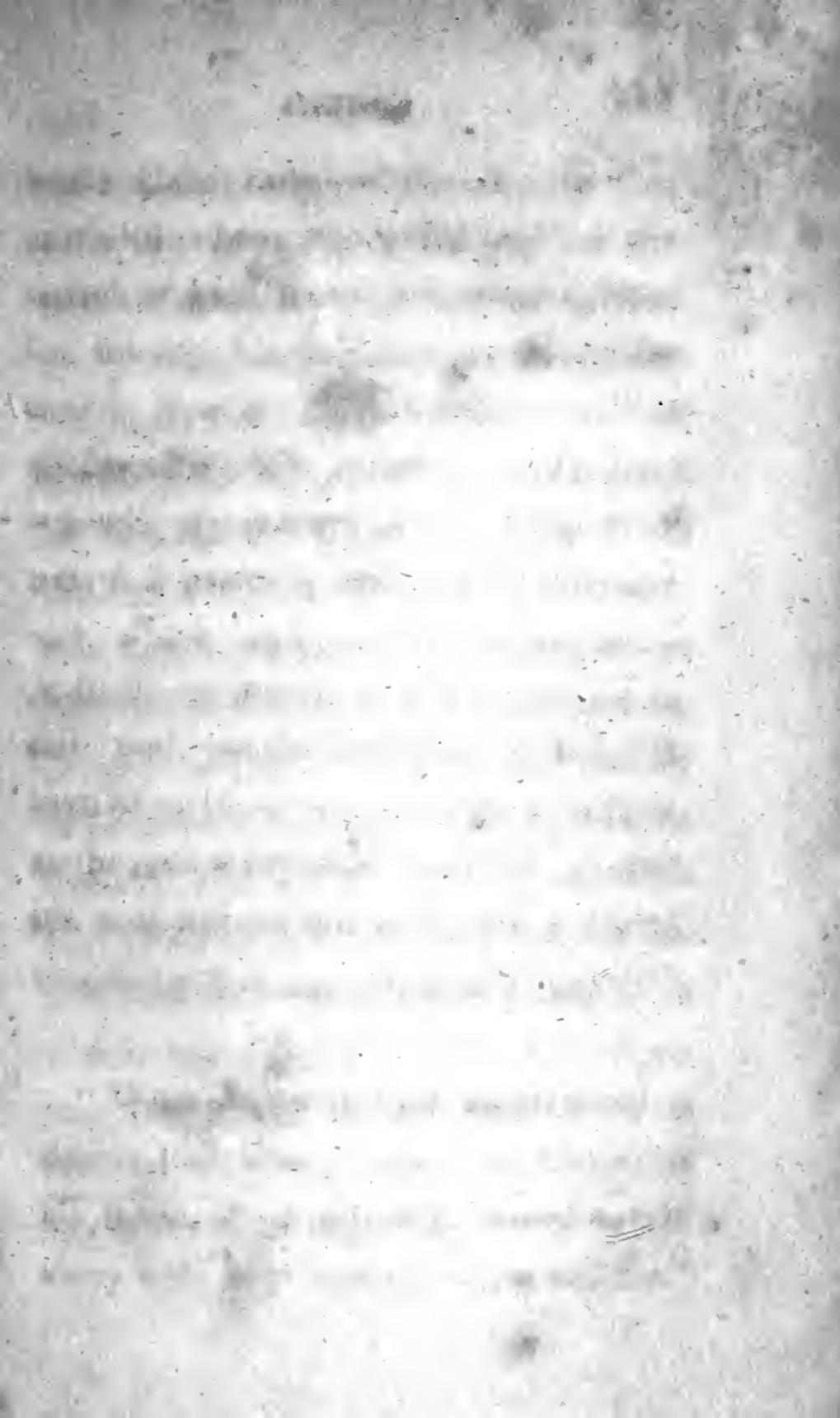
“ What a fuss is here made about a simple individual ! ” observed Aretas, to his uncle, “ it is really absurd to see every body kept waiting in this manner.”

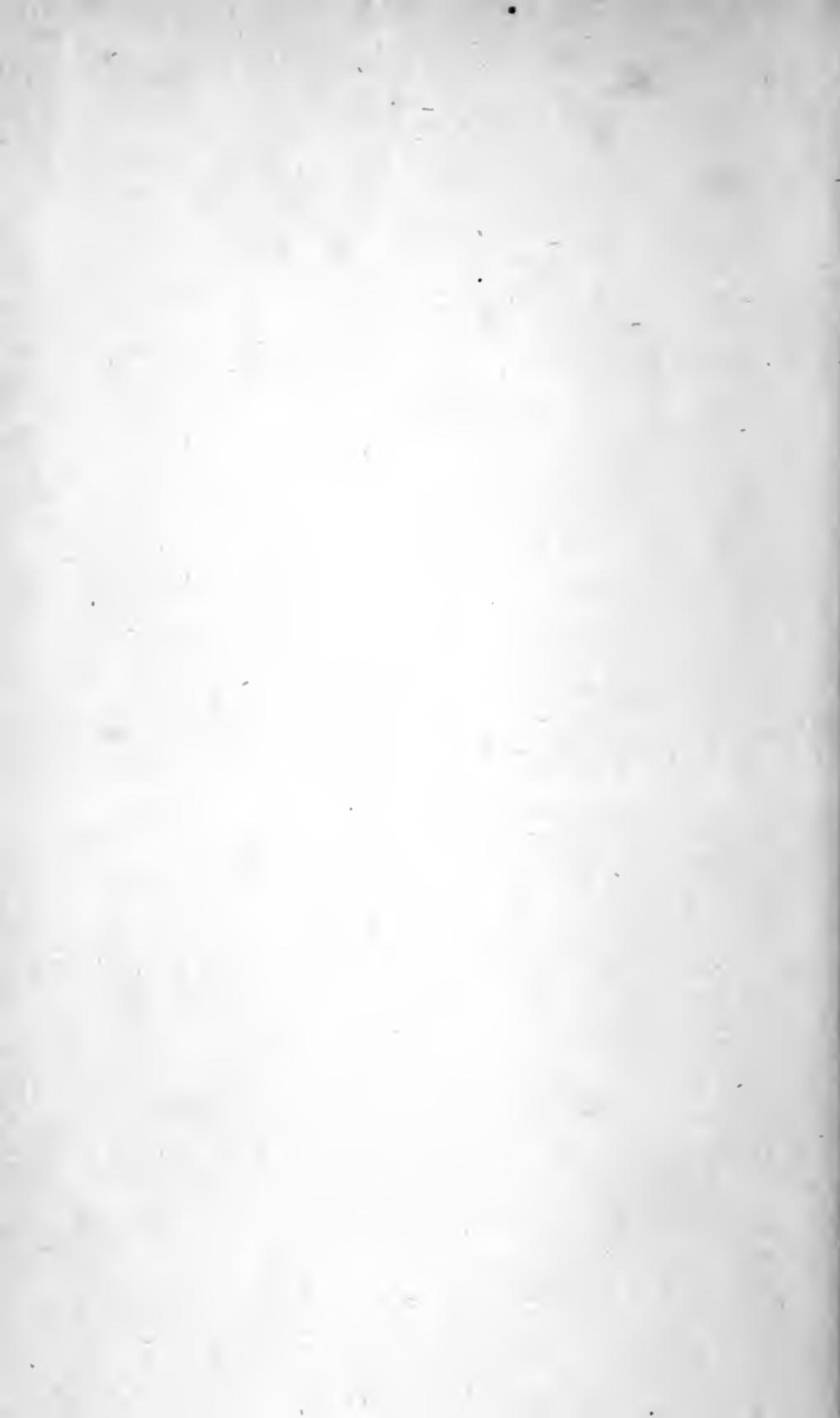
" Oh ! it is the fashion to make a fuss about Miss Clarendon, and really, for once, fashion has shewn some discrimination."

" And doubtless, the young lady owes many of her admirers to her distinguished connections !" returned Aretas.

" There may be something in that, but I am confident that any one who becomes acquainted with Miss Clarendon will soon cease to value her on account of her connections : but here she comes."

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.







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